JULY 1980 NUMBER 29

THE SPACE GAMER

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In This Issue

Well, it's a pretty good issue this time (but then, did you ever see an introduction where the publisher talked about how BAD the magazine is? What do you expect?)

Leading off this issue is "The Temple of Life," by Lawrence Watt-Evans. Lawrence is a regular correspondent and an active fantasy gamer. His first novel, *The Lure of the Basilisk*, appeared in 1979; a sequel (*The City of Seven Temples*) has been completed, and a second sequel is in progress.

Our big game article this time is my FANTASY TRIP designers' notes. After three years of work, I probably could have written forty or fifty pages. I'm letting you off easy, with four.

The reviews and capsules continue to come in; Forrest and I have been very pleased at the response. If you play a new game, write us a review!

One thing that's NOT in this issue is the winner of the contest in TSG 27. The runner-up . . . but not the winner. The reason – the winner was SO good that it'll appear next issue – as a complete game. Read more about that on page 23.

–Steve Jackson

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Where We're Going

It appears that last month's "Where We're Going" caused some unhappiness at Metagaming. Needless to say, no offense was intended – the more so since Forrest's criticisms were largely leveled at me and some of my first staffers, before he and Elton Fewell got involved. Ah, well. I expect we'll get it straightened out soon; I certainly hope so.

On to more cheerful subjects. Those of you who subscribe to TSG will notice that your magazine *did* come with a protective cover this month. The voice of popular demand spoke very clearly – it's expensive, but not outrageously so.

We're going to be instituting a new, very short column each month – a directory of advertisers. A lot of you depend on advertising for your company news. Therefore, we'll run a separate index to ads, by companies, so you can find what you're looking for.

A comment on game reviews: Our "capsule reviews" seem to be going over very well, and we enjoy doing them. But some of our bigger companies haven't yet put us on their review-copy list – even when they're guaranteed a review. I won't name any names, but some of their initials include the letters T, S, R, S, P, and I. So if reviews of certain companies' games are delayed a little bit, you'll know why.

Also, starting this issue, any fiction we run will be followed by a translation into game terms. You can still get fiction anywhere – but not like this! This issue, "The Temple Of Life" is followed by game statistics, in both TFT and AD&D, for the four major characters. They'll make good NPCs for your fantasy campaign. From now on, look for game scenarios, variants, character stats, new ships, weapons, spells, etc., following the science fiction and fantasy stories in TSG. Read it, then play it!

Last words: Between the change-over from Metagaming and the new computer program for addresses, we're still having some problems with people not receiving their copies. Not many, but a few. If you're reading this, you obviously got your copy – but check the label anyway. If ANYTHING about it is wrong, write us and let us know so we can fix it.

That's all I've got for this month – so I'll quit writing and leave you to enjoy the magazine.

Steve Jackson

Next Issue

A complete game! KUNG FU 2100 was designed by B. Dennis Sustare (BUNNIES & BURROWS, INTRUDER) in response to our last contest. It pits the heroic Terminators against the minions of the evil Clonemaster . . . with fists, feet, and various Oriental weapons. It's fast, fun, and playable – and it introduces a new combat system.

Painting Fantasy Miniatures – Part II.

An index to game articles and reviews in TSG issues 15-29.

Featured reviews of two new fantasy games.

More Deus Ex Machina and Wargame Design.

And, as always, lots of capsule reviews.

GAME MASTER

R. Vance Buck (Task Force Games) writes to answer a question raised in last month's **Swordquest** *review: Healing takes place at the end of each turn spent in Sanctuary.*

Readers playing Metagaming's new game, **Rommel's Panzers**, *should note that the rules-section explaining the counters has an error. The counter diagram reverses the values for defense and movement. The values given in the play examples are correct.*

"In *Melee*, the rule for the "standing up" option is explained very briefly. The question is: when your figure has taken 8 or more hits (excluding those taken by armor) and falls down, and the next turn begins, does the figure stand up during the *movement* phase, or wait until attacks are carried out and stand up on his turn according to his DX? Please set me straight on this . . .

–John Spronk

The rules specifically state that a figure stands up during the movement phase – this is on page 8 of the current edition.

–SJ

GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will first be referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.

GAME MASTER also invites publishers to send errata or clarifications for their new games. They will be printed as space allows.

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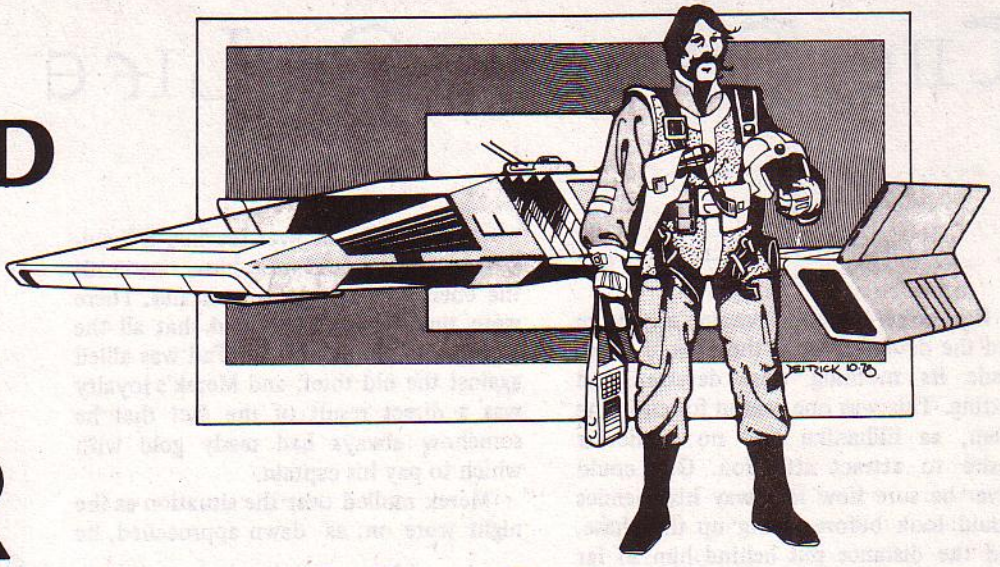

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The Temple Of Life

By
Lawrence Watt-Evans

Few ships came to Avitaine any more and the docks at which the *Broken Stone* made its mooring were deserted and rotting. This was one reason for choosing them, as Elihaniku had no particular desire to attract attention. One could never be sure how far away his enemies would look before giving up the chase, and the distance put behind him so far was not as great as he might have wished.

And as Merek, his captain, reminded him, there are no mooring fees at abandoned piers.

In keeping with Elihaniku's policy of caution, no one left the ship until nightfall; even then, half the crew was kept on board in case a hasty departure became advisable. The others, including Elihaniku and his mysterious companion the Pad, but not Merek, dispersed quickly into the dark, empty streets in search of congenial company.

To Merek's astonishment, within the hour many had returned, and each in his turn told the same tale. Not a single tavern, inn, or brothel was to be found open; all were unlit, windows shuttered and doors barred. No one had seen so much as a single person on the streets. Some ventured to guess that the city was haunted, or cursed, or that a plague was loose; all were eager to depart as soon as possible.

These stories made Merek himself most uneasy but he knew that an immediate departure was out of the question. This stop was no mere pleasure visit; the ship's stores were dangerously low, her water nearly exhausted. Both had to be replenished before she could sail again. This was of most especial importance since the next voyage planned would be a very, very long one; Elihaniku had decreed that the *Broken Stone* was to sail for the legendary Land of the Sun, in the Ultimate East, and Elihaniku owned the ship. Merek suspected that the noble love of adventure that the old man boasted of to the crew was so much nonsense, and that the ancient coward simply wanted to reach someplace so distant that none of his pursuers, not even the Dark King of Nathmar, would follow. Not that the captain didn't sympathize; he hoped that when - and if! - he ever reached Elihaniku's age he would not have one-tenth the enemies that the Chronan did. There were times when it seemed that all the world save Merek and the Pad was allied against the old thief, and Merek's loyalty was a direct result of the fact that he somehow always had ready gold with which to pay his captain.

Merek mulled over the situation as the night wore on; as dawn approached, he

realized that all his crew had been back for a hour or more, but that no word had come from his employer or the Pad.

He began to worry with the first greying of the eastern sky, and by full daylight he was equipping a landing party to scour the city.

These preparations ceased suddenly, however, when the Pad strolled out of an alleyway as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Merek knew better than to talk to the Pad; in fact, most of the crew thought the odd little man was mute. Only in complete privacy would he speak, and then only to a chosen few. Merek had just recently become one of those few. Still, the captain was puzzled by the Pad's nonchalance, and beckoned him to his cabin. With a casual nod, he complied.

The instant the door swung to behind them, the Pad's manner changed completely. He spun on his heel, and locked and barred the door. He peered out the stern window, and seeing no one, drew tight the curtains. Merek was astonished to see him sweating, his hands trembling, for the Pad rarely displayed any emotion

other than suspicion; yet now he was frightened, and that simple fact seemed somehow much more ominous than any number of scared sailors or shuttered taverns.

The two men seated themselves at the captain's rough oaken table, and the Pad spoke in his customary harsh whisper.

"The old man's a prisoner. A wizard, Garl, runs the place, and don't like visitors."

"Why did he take Elihaniku and no one else?"

"We went near his palace, others didn't. Didn't see me."

Merek knew quite well that when the Pad chose not to be seen, he wasn't. When the captain first met his employers they were the most successful thieves in Feltharucash, largely because of the Pad's stealth. The little man could move in almost complete silence, and vanish with startling speed.

"How did Garl capture him?"

"Bats."

There the conversation ended; the Pad had said his piece, and no coaxing from Merek could get more out of him. Merek knew better than to try very hard; he knew everything he needed to know, except what to do next.

After due consideration he decided upon a fairly direct course of action; he would find a talkative native, find out what he could, and try to get into the palace to free the old Chronan.

Thus it was that two strangers settled in the Crimson Peacock for dinner; the taverns were open from sunrise to sunset, but not a moment longer.

The big man talked and sang, and in general made himself congenial company, while the other said not a word and kept his hand always near the hilt of his dagger. It was not long before someone told them the tale of the young king of

Avitaine's unhappy wedding day two years earlier, when their rightful ruler and his new bride, during their nuptial ceremony, entered the Temple of Life never to be seen again; the wizard Garl had sealed the building up, and made himself master of the island during the consequent confusion.

This story was followed by countless anecdotes of the cruelty of their new overlord.

Upon hearing these tales, Merek grew less and less cheerful; how could they hope to free Elihaniku from such a fiend? And how were they to resupply the ship, when Garl kept close watch on all commerce and had forbidden foreign trade? The longer Merek listened, the more convinced he became that it was little short of miraculous that most of the ship's company still remained unharmed and apparently undetected.

As if summoned by these dreary thoughts, a man burst into the tavern, crying, "Garl has found a strange ship in the harbor, and even now he is freezing it!"

Merek joined the crowd that rushed out into the street and down toward the docks where the *Broken Stone* lay at anchor; to his horror, he saw that despite the mild spring weather ice clung to his ship's sails, and grew visibly as he watched. The sailors on the decks were utterly still, as if instantly frozen, and stood in grotesque postures on the whitening planking. As the tavern crowd stood helplessly by, the ice grew and spread until at last the entire vessel was sealed in a vast block of crystal, glittering diamondlike in the sun.

Severely shaken, Merek returned to the Crimson Peacock, where the Pad still sat. He described what he had just seen, but of course received no reply. The Pad sat in total silence, and seemed to be thinking intently. Abruptly he rose, and made as if to leave. Merek rose to follow, but was motioned back to his seat. He complied, and the Pad vanished through the door.

Perhaps an hour later Merek sat staring at his fifteenth beer, wishing the alcohol would affect him, when the Pad slipped in as silently as he had left. He motioned to Merek, and the two strolled casually out into the street.

At the mouth of an alleyway nearby, the Pad vanished, and Merek was jerked roughly back into the shadows. When his eyes had adjusted to the gloom he found himself again facing his companion, who whispered quickly, "Spoke to the old man through the window; you get Garl to the temple by sunset."

Before Merek could reply the Pad had disappeared again, and this time he did not return.

The Pad moved easily through the alleys and byways of Avitaine, and came without incident to the end of an alley which opened onto the great square in front of the Temple of Life. Here he paused to inspect the building. Hewn of solid marble, it gleamed in the afternoon sun. The Pad could see gargoyles with Garl's face perched, leering evilly, upon door, frame, and eaves, where the wizard's magic had installed them two years earlier.

Seeing no means of entry he slipped back into the shadows, and stole silently around the north side of the temple, which proved to be completely blank and featureless; the south side was likewise unadorned. The east end, however, was joined to the house where the temple priests dwelt; the Pad decided that this deserved a closer look.

The windows of the priests' house were unbarred, and within a very few minutes the Pad stood silently in an upstairs room, every sense alert. When he detected no movement nor any indication that his presence had been noticed, he crept with the utmost stealth to the back of the house, and began a systematic search of the unoccupied rooms for any entrance to the temple proper. After considerable exploration, he was forced to admit to himself that there was only one door linking the house to the temple, and that was in the main hallway, where three solemn robed figures stood talking quietly. It was clearly beyond even his consummate skill to slip by this trio unnoticed.

Desperate now, for the plan, if it was to be successful, must be carried out by sundown, the Pad picked up a nearby candelabrum and hurled it across the hall to a chamber opposite, where it struck the floor with an alarming crash and clatter.

The three priests abruptly ceased their conversation and turned toward the noise; as they hurried into the empty room to investigate, the Pad slipped by and hurried to the door. Breathing a silent sigh of relief he grasped the handle and pulled.

It was locked.

After the Pad left, Merek wasted no time in returning to the tavern, where he finished his fifteenth beer and three more as well, to strengthen his nerve. Thus fortified, he set out boldly for the palace; as the drinks at last began to make

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themselves felt, he began swaggering. By the time he reached the palace gate, he was boasting and singing, and the appearance of two cloaked guards failed to disturb him until they grabbed him by the arms and proceeded to drag him through the entrance to the royal courtyard.

He was led unceremoniously to the Great Hall, and tossed on his face before the throne. He scrambled to his knees, lifting his gaze slowly to the bedizened figure of Garl, who sat brooding over him. The wizard shone with an unearthly dark fire, towering from his throne; he was inhumanly tall with a gaunt, drawn visage, and glared down at the besotted seafarer as a pagan idol might regard an insect that had had the effrontery to walk across his altar. His voice rolled forth like the boom of a great drum, resounding from the tapestried walls.

"Who are you, and what do you mean brawling about my city?"

"I am Merek sen Ermi, merchant and mercenary of Feltharucash in the Sealands, and captain of the caravel *Broken Stone*. How is it your mightiness need ask? Are you not a great wizard, with all knowledge at your fingertips?"

"You speak insolently, Merek sen Ermi; are you perhaps weary of life? I am in truth a mighty wizard, and it is dan-

gerous to doubt it; but I have better uses for my art than to waste my time keeping track of such scum as you."

"Indeed? What else has such a piddling overlord to do? You rule nothing but a small island, and a city, by your words, of scum; does this befit a mighty wizard?"

"You talk boldly indeed, and I suspect it is mostly liquor speaking, and not your better judgment. Know that I am master of all the arcane arts, and in my mastery choose to devote but a tiny portion of my time to statecraft."

"Ah, so you have mastered all arts! Then tell me, O great Garl, why do you bother with such trash as myself? Why do you argue with me, when here in your own city is a much greater foe? Why, I venture that even I could best you at the art of swordcraft, and there can be no doubt that there is in your city one who you concede to be your superior in many things."

"Who is this foe you speak of, then? Why has he not challenged my rule?"

"Because you have imprisoned him by trickery, of course, being afraid to face him openly. I speak of Avitaine's rightful king, and the Spirit of Life that anoints him King." Merek had no idea if the King was really in any way Garl's better, or even if he still lived; but the Pad had said to bring the wizard to the temple, and Merek, in his drunken bravado, thought this the most expedient way.

He was quite correct. Unfortunately, he had also spoken a boast that could well bring his own death.

"Perhaps, fool, there is some sense in what you say. It is time that I made plain my mastery over this absurd Spirit, and completed the task I began two years ago. First, though, I would answer a challenge you have made. You ventured that you could best me at swordplay; would you then be so good as to support your claim?"

Merek's alcoholic courage abruptly vanished. He was a fair swordsman, but surely no match for a wizard. He sought to delay. "Very well, but as the challenged, I claim the right to choose time and place."

"Granted, if they be in the city and ere dawn."

That demolished any hope of significant delay, and Merek, placing his faith in the Pad's mysterious plan, said, "Then I choose the temple steps at sunset."

"Done. My men shall assist you."

Merek found himself escorted roughly from the room. As he was led to a cell to await evening, he consoled himself with the thought that he had obeyed the Pad's instructions--and it rather appeared that it would cost him his life.

Meanwhile, the Pad had found no means of escape, and confronted the three priests in a fighter's stance, dagger in hand.

"Who are you that enter here unbidden? Do you come from Garl?"

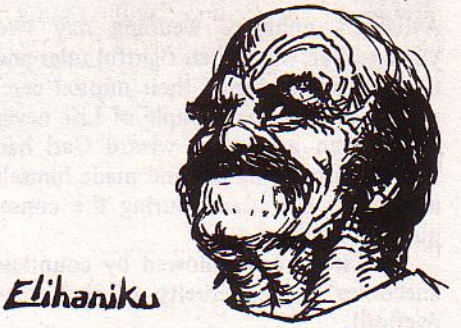
The Pad made no answer, but straightened a bit. Had he perhaps assumed too quickly that these holy men were his enemies? The priest's tone held no love for his sorcerous overlord.

"Answer us, man. We shall not harm you. We are not armed."

Still slightly suspicious, the Pad sheathed his dagger.

"Why do you not speak? Have you no tongue?"

The Pad made a motion with his head



which the priests took as confirmation. They looked at one another.

"Surly Garl would not send a mute!"

"Are you from Garl?"

The Pad shook his head vigorously.

"Are you perhaps a thief, then?"

Again, no.

"Then what do you here?"

The Pad motioned toward the temple door.

"What would you in the temple?"

"Do you not know that Garl has sealed it?"

"Even we are no longer admitted; it is Garl's punishment to us that we live ever near the temple unable to enter."

The Pad looked at them quizzically. Then he drew his dagger again and stepped to the door.

The priests crowded around him and watched in amazement as he drew an assortment of curious implements from a pouch on his belt. First, he wedged the dagger into the crack as far as it would go, so that the door would spring open when the lock released, and also so that the cold iron would interfere with the magical seal. Next he produced a succession of lockpicks, and tried each in turn until a deep, satisfying click was heard. Thus encouraged, he tried the door, which still refused to budge. He reached again into his pouch, and when his hand emerged it held a gleaming silver talisman in the shape of a key that bore the stamp of the Thieves' Guild of Thalasme. This was one of his most prized possessions, and had brought him many a rare treasure from magically-sealed vaults--which had cost many a magician his job. It glittered brightly in his hand and he gazed at it silently for a moment. Then, with carefully-learned gestures taught him by his father, he directed it at the door and to the astonishment of the priests intoned a slow, deep chant.

He concluded the chant with no visible effect, but now the priests were praying, a chant of their own, calling for the omnipotent Spirit to aid this little housebreaker. The Pad did not interrupt; who could better assist him in entering the Spirit's own temple?

The prayer droned on, and just as the Pad's hopes began to fade, a shiver ran

through the heavy door. With a sudden snap it sprang open, and his dagger clattered to the floor. He snatched up his weapon and sped through the opening; the priests, with a cry of joy, followed him.

Inside, a spiral staircase led up to a balcony; from there, the Pad could see the entire interior of the temple. It was a single great room, stretching out a hundred yards before him, dim and grey with incense, which hung in curiously motionless clouds about him. Candles burned with an oddly steady flame along the walls, and bright carpets lined the floor.

On one of these carpets knelt a handsome young couple, completely motionless, apparently praying.

The Pad stopped abruptly; how could there be living people in here? The temple had been sealed since Garl's usurpation two years earlier; no one could have entered, and surely the King and his bride must have starved to death long ago!

Or had they? Perhaps one could not starve in the Temple of Life; the Pad had heard that said, but always took it to refer to the famous munificence of the priests toward the poor. Could it be that the saying had a more literal significance?

Carefully, he stepped down from the balcony, and moved toward the worshippers. They were richly dressed and wore coronets, and they took no note of his approach. The Pad began to suspect that the temple was as frozen as the *Broken Stone*, save only that no ice and cold were manifest here.

The deathly silence was broken abruptly from behind, and the Pad whirled to see the priests on the balcony beginning a solemn chant. Ignoring them, he turned back to the west, and moved swiftly past the kneeling pair to the great golden doors. As he neared them, he fancied he could hear the sounds of an excited crowd outside, and he remembered his instructions to the captain.

Merek stood terrified on the steps of the Temple of Life, sword in hand, as the wizard took a few practice swings at the air. The crowd muttered about him, and the catcalls were heard directed at both sides.

Merek suddenly found himself propelled forward, his sword-arm raised, and heard the wizard speak.

"Well, captain, you seem less eager for combat now. Come, cheer up! I'll even let you have the first blow. Go ahead; let the battle begin!"

Summoning his nerve, Merek swung powerfully, and to his amazement saw his blade strike home—and glance off the sorcerer's bare neck.

The necromancer laughed. "Fool! Now you see part of my mastery! Where other men suffer and die, I cannot! I am immortal!" Then there was no time for words, as swords met and clashed.

The battle raged, Merek taking only defensive measures; what profit lay in striking at impervious flesh? He chose instead to simply try and prolong the battle, and therefore his life, as long as possible. Small wounds soon appeared on his arms and forehead, and as blood obscured his vision he gave ground and silently began his death-prayer.

Inside the temple, the Pad tugged at the golden portals; they had neither handle nor lock, and seemed free to move, yet utterly refused to do so. The priests' chant droned on, until all the temple seemed to ring with it. It echoed and throbbed and became impossibly loud, making the Pad's head swim. Then one candle seemed to flicker; then another, and the clouds of incense swirled sluggishly. The king stirred slightly, and now, untouched, the doors that had yielded not at all to the Pad's strength began to inch inward.

Merek was trapped; there was nowhere he could run, for the crowd encircled the steps. He backed against the wall of the shrine, his blade desperately parrying the wizard's blows.

A movement at the corner of his eye caught his attention, while his body automatically continued to fight. Yes, it was true! The temple doors were opening! The instant he saw a gap in the web of steel that his opponent wove about him he dove through it, and through the widening space between the great gold valves.

With a cry, the wizard followed, and though none saw the blow, all saw the robed figure falter, then collapse forward, to lie motionless with the hilt of the Pad's dagger protruding from his back.

Merek dropped his unbloodied sword and staggered out again into the fading dusk, and immediately behind him came a wondering young king and his beautiful bride. A stunned silence fell upon the crowd, quickly broken by a shout that grew into a roar of acclamation.

As the royal couple were borne away by the cheering crowd, Merek and the Pad remained standing over the strangely unimpressive corpse of the dead necromancer. With a grimace, the smaller man bent and pulled his dagger free, muttering, "Sixteen." He wiped his blade and sheathed it, as a priest joined them.

"I don't understand," declared Merek,

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puzzling over the wizard's body. "He was invulnerable."

"No," said the priest softly. "He had reversed nature, so that he was invulnerable where other men are not; but here in the Temple of Life, no ordinary man can suffer or die. Thus it was here alone that he could be slain. That is why his first action was to seal it; he knew it held the power to destroy him."

Merek gazed at the priest for several minutes, but made no answer.

Four days later the *Broken Stone* set sail, a good wind to her back and her holds full with supplies that were the gift of a grateful monarch. The ice had melted quickly in the sun and had left the crew unharmed; Elihaniku was free once more, at his accustomed place on the poop.

Merek was pleased to be at sea again, and almost completely recovered from his fight, but one question remained to trouble him. When he was sure that the sails were properly set and the helmsman sure of his course, he asked Elihaniku, "Old man, you were imprisoned from the first; how did you know what the Pad and I should do?"

Elihaniku paused before answering, then said, "Does it not seem to you that such a vast temple must have more than three priests?"

"I had not thought of it."

"Ah! You should think of everything."

"Forgive me, old man, but I cannot. How does a lack of priests account for your knowledge?"

"Have you no wit at all? There was a priest imprisoned in the next cell who told me all. And better company than I have here, he was!"

Leaning on the rail beside them, the Pad grinned.

Character Stats – TFT

The Pad	*Merek*	*Elihaniku*	*Garl*
Hero	Hero	Hero	Wizard
ST 9	ST 13	ST 8	ST 11
DX 16	DX 12	DX 11	DX 12
IQ 12	IQ 13	IQ 14	IQ 26
Knife	Sword	Sword	Sword
Thrown Weapons	Seamanship	Literacy	Literacy
Literacy	Boating	Charisma	
Silent Movement	Literacy	Alertness	Light
Recognize Value	Swimming	Recognize Value	Lock/Knock
Thief	Charisma	Thief	Reveal/Conceal
Spying	Recognize Value	Courtly Graces	Mage Sight
	New Followers	Tactics	Curse
	Captain	Master Thief	Telekinesis
			Remove Thrown Spell
			Spell Shield
			Iron Flesh
			7-Hex Illusion
			Trance
			Summon Demon
			Dissolve Enchantment
			Spellsniffer
			Wizard's Wrath
			Lesser Magic Item Creation
			Megahex Freeze
			Greater Magic Item Creation
			Dry Ice (special)

Dry Ice (T) (IQ 20) – Causes one mega-hex and all within it to freeze solid. The area will remain frozen, regardless of weather, until a Dissolve Enchantment is cast. (Remove Thrown Spell will affect only one hex.) Anything removed from the frozen mega-hex (by telekinesis, for example) will instantly thaw. Any physical object or creature entering the mega-hex will instantly become frozen to the ice. Cost: 12 ST.

(It is presumed that Garl owns a strength battery. The "bats" which kidnapped Elihaniku were demons. The immortality "spell" was the result of some very special interaction with a god or demon.)

Character Stats – AD&D

The Pad	*Merek*	*Elihaniku*	*Garl*
Align: True Neutral	Align: Neutral Good	Align: Chaotic Neutral	Align: Lawful Evil
Prof: Thief	Prof: Fighter	Prof: Thief	Prof: Fighter/Magic User
Level: 9	Level: 6	Level: 10	Level: 5/20
STR: 9	STR: 13	STR: 8	STR: 11
INT: 12	INT: 9	INT: 14	INT: 19
WIS: 5	WIS: 12	WIS: 4	WIS: 6
DEX: 18	DEX: 12	DEX: 11	DEX: 12
CON: 7	CON: 15	CON: 7	CON: 6
CHA: 6	CHA: 14	CHA: 12	CHA: 6

Dry Ice (9th Level -- range: 1"/level; duration: permanent; area of effect: ½" radius/level; components: V,S; casting time: 9 segments; Saving Throw: none).
Explanation/Description: Same as per TFT. Creatures of cold (such as the white dragon and the yeti) should be allowed a saving throw at -4. In AD&D, this spell can be dissolved like any other.

Well, It's Finally Out: Designer's Notes and Errata for The Fantasy Trip

by Steve Jackson

Work on *The Fantasy Trip* has dominated the last three years of my life. It bothers me a little bit to realize that. Would I do it again? Maybe. But not the same way.

It started in early 1977. I had just found out, much to my surprise, that I could design games . . . people were buying *Ogre*. But the game that I was playing a lot myself was *Dungeons & Dragons*. And like everyone else who tried an early version of D&D, I wanted to make some changes. The polyhedra dice were irritating – but the biggest problem was combat. The D&D combat rules were confusing and unsatisfying. No tactics, no real movement – you just rolled dice and died. T&T was the same way. *Monsters! Monsters!* was more detailed in some ways, but still allowed no tactics.

So I did something about it. My original idea was to design a game that would accurately simulate medieval sword-and-shield combat. It would have to be simple and fast, and FEEL accurate. So *Melee* was born. It was very simple, as fantasy games go. Instead of six attributes, it used only two: strength and dexterity. Movement was very simple, and combat was handled by "options" which allowed a variety of different actions. When I designed *Melee*, I wasn't going for anything but a quick, somewhat realistic game that could be played by itself or used to fight battles in a role-playing adventure.

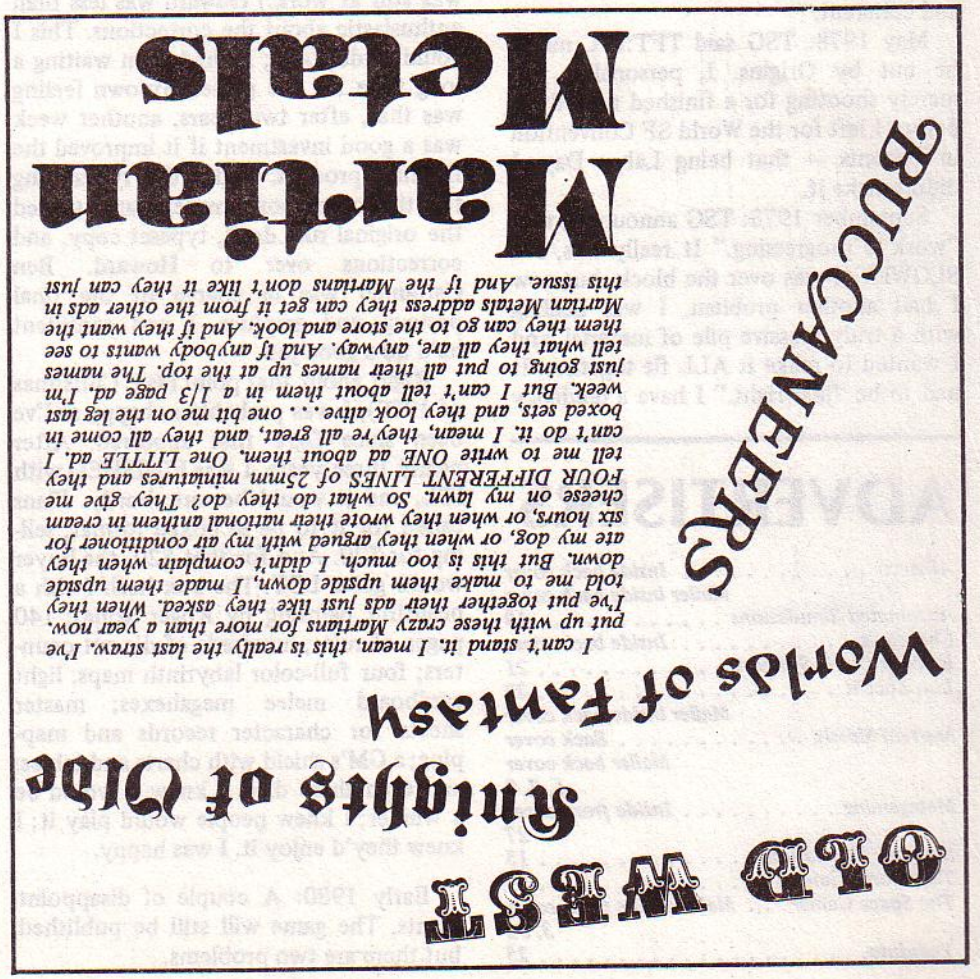
It wasn't long, though, before I realized that the *Melee* system could be the basis for a whole new role-playing game. Metagaming was VERY interested in getting in on the fantasy role-playing boom . . . so work began, even before *Melee* was completed, on a set of role-playing rules. The original name for the whole system was to be *Sword and Sorcery*. Unfortunately, SPI used that one first. The second choice was *The Fantasy Trip*.

The first mention of TFT came in TSG 10. "Where We're Going" plugged the upcoming *Melee*, and mentioned that it was part of Metagaming's upcoming RPG, *In The Labyrinth*. But it would be a long time before ITL saw the light of day. . . .

March 1977: I finished researching and playtesting *Melee*.

May 1977: I finished the graphics and typesetting for *Melee*, pasted up the Liz Danforth counter and cover art, and handed them over to Howard at Metagaming for printing. (Back in the good old days, I didn't just *design* the games I did for Metagaming. I got to do the whole thing. Design . . .edit . . . playtest . . . set type . . . map and counter graphics . . . charts and tables . . . pasteup . . . proofreading . . . *everything*. I handled production work for my early games right up until they went to the printer. I even designed and laid out the advertising. Every designer should be so lucky! That's part of the reason I once enjoyed game design more than I have lately. It's great to have total control over the quality of your creation, every step of the way.)

July 1977: Metagaming printed up an extra 4,000 copies of *Melee*. It was selling! I was busy with *Wizard*. Adding one more attribute – intelligence – completed the character system. With combat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I can't stand it. I mean, this is really the last straw. I've put up with these crazy Martians for more than a year now. I've put together their ads just like they asked. When they told me to make them upside down, I made them upside down. But this is too much. I didn't complain when they ate my dog, or when they argued with my air conditioner for six hours, or when they wrote their national anthem in cream cheese on my lawn. So what do they do? They give me FOUR DIFFERENT LINES of 25mm miniatures and they tell me to write ONE ad about them. One LITTLE ad. I can't do it. I mean, they're all great, and they all come in boxed sets, and they look alive . . . one bit me on the leg last week. But I can't tell about them in a 1/3 page ad. I'm just going to put all their names up at the top. The names tell what they all are, anyway. And if anybody wants to see them they can go to the store and look. And if they want the Martian Metals address they can get it from the other ads in this issue. And if the Martians don't like it they can just

already written up, and the magic from *Wizard*, I thought I was halfway there. Just write the rules for game-mastering and presto! An FRP system. Well, it SOUNDED easy.

September 1977: TSG 13 mentioned TFT. For the first time, an estimated availability date (late February) was given.

December 1977: *Wizard* went to press – a press run of 30,000 copies. It was the fanciest Microgame that Metagaming ever produced: extra-large map, extra-long rulebook, and two counter sheets. (Subsequent editions had only one counter sheet.) Like *Melee* before it, it became immediately popular, rating high on both SPI and Metagaming surveys.

January 1978: The TFT schedule was altered again; it was now to be available "probably before June." At this point I was suffering from the worst case of writer's block that I've ever experienced. Fortunately, it only hurt ITL. I could and did work on other games, including the solitaire *Death Test.* But I was getting almost nothing accomplished on TFT:ITL.

March 1978: *Death Test* went to press. I knew we had a good system when DT was finished. You can NOT write clear, short solitaire scenarios for a role-playing game unless the original rules are clear and coherent.

May 1978: TSG said TFT:ITL might be out by Origins. I, personally, was merely shooting for a finished rules draft before I left for the World SF Convention in Phoenix – that being Labor Day. I didn't make it.

September 1978: TSG announced that "work is progressing." It really was, but SLOWLY. I was over the block, but now I had another problem. I was dealing with a truly massive pile of material, and I wanted to make it ALL fit together. It had to be "just right." I have a tendency toward monomaniacal perfectionism, and the tendency was STRONG right then.

Early 1979: I delivered the last rules draft (we thought) to Metagaming. It was better than 300 typewritten pages. TSG announced that publication would be in one of two forms: a "stripped" $20 game or a "cadillac" $30 game. Most of the feedback on that was emphatically in favor of the $20 version.

Mid-1979: Correspondence with Draper Kauffman, a gamer in St. Louis, turned up some problems with the economics in TFT. That's my weak point; it seems to be one of Draper's strong ones. He pointed out some problems and loopholes in the sections on jobs and magic items. He also told me how I could fix them . . . and I did, gratefully. (Thanks again, Draper!)

Labor Day, 1979: I was at NorthAmericon in Louisville, trying to relax. In my spare moments, I would occasionally gaze at my briefcase and grin mindlessly. It contained a completely typeset copy of TFT:ITL. A little proofreading was all it needed . . .

Late 1979: Proofreading of the typeset copy was completed. A lot of corrections and changes were still needed – including some more on the economics. (Draper was still at work.) Howard was less than enthusiastic about the corrections. This I could understand; he had been waiting a long time for the game. My own feeling was that, after two years, another week was a good investment if it improved the finished product. I did the typesetting for the corrections myself, and turned the original rule draft, typeset copy, and corrections over to Howard. Ben Ostrander was in charge of the final pasteup and graphics. I was confident he'd do a good job.

Right about that point (say, Christmas of 1979), I was probably as happy as I've been since *Ogre* first appeared. After nearly three years, I was FINISHED with ITL, and it would be out shortly. Plans called for it to be in boxed format, selling for $20. And for that $20, the buyer would get a LOT. The box itself (with a beautiful painting by Roger Stine); 140 pages of rules; hundreds of die-cut counters; four full-color labyrinth maps; light cardboard melee megahexes; master sheets for character records and mapping; a GM's shield with charts and tables; and even three dice. I knew it would be a winner; I knew people would play it; I knew they'd enjoy it. I was happy.

Early 1980: A couple of disappointments. The game will still be published, but there are two problems.

The first: The boxed game will not be published – not now, at least. Howard felt it would be too expensive and might not sell well. Instead, the rules would appear in four separate books. *In the Labyrinth, Advanced Melee*, and *Advanced Wizard* would sell for $5 each, while *Tollenkar's Lair* (the "stocked labyrinth" and adventure) would sell for $3. All of these would be booklets only; those components which could not be printed in the books would be omitted. No counters or ref shield; no color maps (after Ben had worked so hard on them). Too bad. But I could see his point. Probably, from a sales viewpoint, four little books that add up to $18 are better than one big box at $20.

The second: Howard informs me he's changing his procedures. I don't get to look at page proofs before the booklets are printed. I'd been expecting a last chance to catch problems; I feel I owe it to the people who buy my designs. That's the reason for the Designer's Errata, below.

March 1980 (give or take a few weeks): The four booklets came back from the printers. There weren't too many errors – but there were some. (See the Designer's Errata, below). On the whole, feedback has been favorable. Two new MicroQuests are typeset and awaiting publication. (I forgot to mention those in the chronology. They're both solitaire adventures. *Death Test II* is my own design, created during 1979. *Grailquest*, by Guy McLimore, is a "Knights of the Round Table" scenario.)

May 1980: I concluded an agreement with Howard Thompson, whereby Metagaming gained all my remaining copyrights to the TFT material.

As Things Stand Now . . .

I've gotten a number of questions recently about my own opinions, future plans, etc., concerning TFT: Some of those questions, with answers:

How do I feel about TFT now? I still think it's a good game – one of the best on the market. There's always room for improvement. I no longer have any say in how TFT will evolve, but I'll watch with interest.

Will I design future TFT games? Unlikely. One supplement that I designed, and several that I edited, are at Metagaming now and may eventually be published. There is dispute over the status of another supplement originally designed for TFT. I have literally reams of notes that were intended for later TFT games or supplements. If these ever are used,

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they will probably appear in a generalized form, suitable for any fantasy system.

Will color maps and counters for TFT ever be published? I don't know. That is up to Metagaming.

Am I earning a royalty on TFT material? Not any longer. The copyrights on *Melee, Wizard, Death Test, Death Test II, In The Labyrinth, Advanced Wizard,* and *Tollenkar's Lair* are now owned by Metagaming. Metagaming has applied for a trademark on the name "The Fantasy Trip."

Do I run my own TFT campaign? Not any longer. I haven't played for six months or so. Right now I'm a little burned out on TFT, and I'm very busy with TSG and several new game designs. But I'm keeping my notes. One day I may get back into it. Right now, the Friday night TSG play sessions are busy with other games.

Errata

Here follows the product of some two months' perusal of the four new TFT booklets as they were finally published. I would like to thank the many gamers who wrote to me with questions and comments; many of you caught things that I missed.

These are the "Designer's Errata" to the first editions – my own opinions about what should be changed in the four books for better clarity and playability. These are not "official" – I no longer own the game copyrights – but they are published with the express permission of Metagaming. For each change, I have noted whether the original problem was an apparent pasteup error, an apparent error in my original draft, or simply a clarification of the rules as printed.

I understand that Metagaming is working on revisions to the TFT system; I hope this material will be of use in that project. And until then, I hope it adds to your enjoyment of the game. That's what this whole business is about.

IN THE LABYRINTH

Page 2. Index. Comment: The index is all right as far as it goes, but could have been more useful had it been more comprehensive.

Page 6. A correction for WOODSMAN was pasted at the end of GADGETEER. Just delete the last four lines under GADGETEER.

Page 7. Omitted word. Should read "WIZARDLY THIEF. He'll have a high DX, and a few thievish talents . . . "

Page 8. Under DEXTERITY, reference is made to a table of DX adjustments. This table was to have appeared on the referee shield. It is not included in any of the present booklets. Players may wish to compile their own.

Page 12. A paragraph appears to have been omitted from the SWIMMING talent. Should read "General swimming ability. This talent also increases your chances of surviving a fall into water, even in armor. If you fall into water make a saving roll vs. adjDX: 4 dice for a non-swimmer, 2 for a swimmer. A figure with the Diving talent (see below) succeeds automatically."

Page 13. Typo. Fencing talent, last line, should read "you do DOUBLE damage on any "to hit" roll of 7, 6, or 5 . . . "

Page 13. Business Sense talent (clarification): A figure with this talent cannot swindle another figure who also has the Business Sense ability. Note that almost all merchants have Business Sense.

Page 14. Inconsistency (my fault!) Line 3 of the Thief talent should read "This skill is of less use against magically locked doors (see DOORS, pp. 44-45) . . . "

Page 16. Clarification (this is supposed to be under Talents, but I can't find it. Possibly I omitted it from the final draft.) "It takes a minimum of 3 months of study to add a talent requiring 1 IQ point. A 2-point talent takes 6 months, a 3-point talent 9 months. These times double for wizards."

Page 19. Clarification: Last line should refer the reader to GUNPOWDER WEAPONS in *Advanced Melee.*

Page 21. "Mapping and Map Making" suggests that GMs take the time to color the labyrinth maps with colored pencils. I would say that this is absolutely necessary.

Page 21. "Narrow Tunnel." Clarification: Note that a multi-hex creature COULD travel through a 1-hex tunnel, IF it is only 1 hex wide itself.

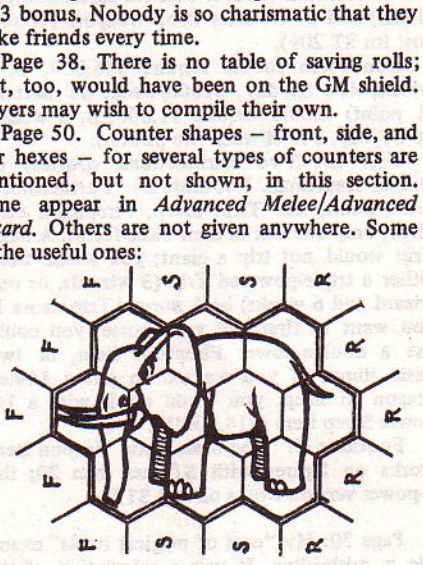
Page 25. JOBS. Clarification: Magic items (except Charms) do NOT help on the job-risk roll. Omission (may have resulted from my own error – whatever the source, it's important to play balance): should read " . . . give him enough experience points to raise one attribute, or 1,000 experience points, whichever is less."

Page 30. Thieves' Guild: It takes a minimum of 6 months to learn DETECT TRAPS, 3 for REMOVE TRAPS – not the other way around. My mistake. Clarification: You pay no extra fee to learn the Thief or Master Thief talents, but you must be a member in good standing (whatever that is) of the local underworld during the time you are "studying."

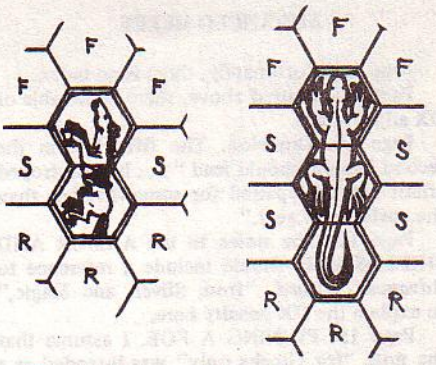
Page 37. Reaction Rolls. Omission – fairly important. The modifiers to a reaction roll CANNOT give a character or party better than a +3 bonus. Nobody is so charismatic that they make friends every time.

Page 38. There is no table of saving rolls; that, too, would have been on the GM shield. Players may wish to compile their own.

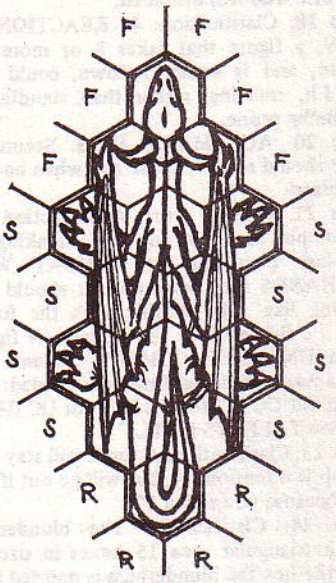
Page 50. Counter shapes – front, side, and rear hexes – for several types of counters are mentioned, but not shown, in this section. Some appear in *Advanced Melee/Advanced Wizard.* Others are not given anywhere. Some of the useful ones:



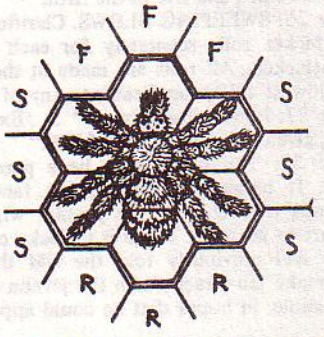
Elephant or other 10-hex beast



Typical 1-hex-wide creatures: horse (2 hexes) and lizard (3 hexes)



14-hex dragon



Giant spider or other megahex beast

Page 54. WRAITHS – clarification. For an explanation of "insubstantiality," see the spell of the same name in *Advanced Wizard.*

Page 60. Apparent pasteup problem. The last paragraph under OTHER MAMMALS is a duplicate of an earlier paragraph; delete it. The next-to-last paragraph refers to the section on HORSES and should be the last paragraph in that section.

Page 63. Hymenopteran workers can carry 250+ kg – not 500. My mistake – I was thinking in pounds.

Page 66. Clarification: Slimes ARE vulnerable to all kinds of combat magic, though they cannot sense illusions. They die if exposed to daylight, which is why they are normally found only underground.

Pages 71 and 73. Colored pencils will make these maps more readable.

ADVANCED MELEE

Page 1. Unfortunately, there is no index.

Page 4. As noted above, there is no table of DX adjustments.

Page 10. Omission. The fifth line in the second column should read " . . . half-destroyed armor can be repaired for somewhat less than the cost of new gear."

Page 12. The notes to the ARMOR AND SHIELDS table should include a reference to *Advanced Wizard*, "Iron, Silver, and Magic," to explain the DX penalty here.

Page 15. PINNING A FOE. I assume that the note "for Greeks only" was intended as a witticism. It was added after the manuscript left my hands. Nevertheless, I apologize to anyone else who was offended.

Page 18. Clarification: In REACTION TO INJURY, a figure that takes 8 or more hits one turn, and is knocked down, could take option I.h, crawling, rather than standing up or remaining prone.

Page 20. AUTOMATIC HITS. Second to last line should read " 'to hit' roll when he feels it's necessary . . . "

Page 21. Pasteup error. A correction line has been put in the wrong place, making the next-to-last paragraph of COMBAT WITH BARE HANDS very confusing. It should read something like this, starting with the fourth line: ". . . fighter does 1-2 damage. A fighter with an UNARMED COMBAT talent does extra damage when fighting bare-handed: one extra hit for UC I, 2 for UC II, 3 for UC III and above. See TALENTS in ITL."

Page 23. Clarification. A torch will stay lit if you drop it intentionally, but will go out if you drop it because you rolled 17.

Page 24. Clarification. The blunderbuss affects a triangular area 15 hexes in size. Its apex is the hex the blunderbuss is pointed into, adjacent to the user. The blunderbuss hits that hex, two in the next line, three in the next, four in the next, and five in the fifth.

Page 26. SWEEPING BLOWS. Clarification: The attacker rolls separately for each figure being attacked. All rolls are made at the time of the lowest adjDX applicable to any of them.

Page 27. Line 3 should read " . . . Example of Play, given in Section IV-B of ITL."

Page 27. There seems to be a paragraph missing. It basically explained the fact that Melio was jabbing with the javelin, which is too short to jab with. Melio is a sneaky character. He had previously told the GM that he would make jab-attacks with the javelin whenever possible, in hopes that he could appear to be engaging in real combat without the other characters realizing that he was in no danger! Had he rolled a hit, it would have had no effect.

ADVANCED WIZARD

Page 1. Not only can this game not be used by itself; it requires some familiarity with *Advanced Melee* if it is to be used with TFT: ITL.

Page 1. Again, an index would have helped.

Page 9, second-to-last paragraph. Clarification: "cannot use another wish to insure a roll of 3 or 4."

Page 10, starting from the top: pasteup problem. Should read: "of the failed IQ rolls, it wouldn't work. He would lose the wish to no effect.

Pentagrams will not protect the wizard in this battle of wills – though a good pentagram would prevent the wizard from smashing anything else . . . "

Page 12. Clarification: A "good hard Magic Fist" might be 4 hits or more.

Page 14. The last sentence of the LIGHTNING spell is inconsistent with DESTRUCTION OF MAGIC ITEMS on p. 38. I suspect I failed to correct this problem before turning in the final copy, though I remember noticing it. At any rate, delete the last sentence of LIGHTNING. P. 38 is correct.

Page 15. A paragraph is missing from the EXPLOSIVE GEM spell. I cannot say for sure what was there originally. The following rules will be playable:

"The Explosive Gem spell costs 5 ST for every die of damage the gem will do when it detonates – maximum 8 dice damage. Unlike most magic items, a gem may be made instantly if the ST is available. One must begin with a gem worth at least $50. Once a gem is rendered explosive with a given power, it cannot be enchanted again to make it stronger. If this is attempted it will explode with the combined power of both spells."

Page 16. Clarification: The TRANCE may not be attempted more than twice per day.

Page 26. Clarification: Gold, bronze, etc. weapons may also be carried by a wizard, but edged weapons of such materials will do less damage than silver or steel.

Page 27-28. Put a "B" after Trip, Blur, Slow Movement, Sleep, Freeze, Fireproof, and Stone Flesh. Put an "A" after Detect Life and Detect Enemies (double cost for each additional MH) and a "C" after Drop Weapons (double cost for ST 20+).

Iron Flesh should require $16,000, B, 5 weeks, 450 ST/day, $1600/week. ST battery (1 point) should require $1,000, B, 2 weeks, 20 ST/day, $40 ci/week (no potion).

Page 29. Two clarifications, courtesy of Draper Kauffman. Footnote B: "Furthermore, some items, like Trip, Sleep, Fireproof, etc., affect only one hex in their basic forms. A basic Trip would not trip a giant; you would need either a triple-powered Trip (3 wizards, or one wizard and 6 weeks) or 3 normal Trip items. If you want to fireproof your horse, you could use a double-power Fireproof item, or two basic items. If you wanted to put a 14-hex dragon to sleep, you could do it with a 14-power Sleep item ($14,000!)".

Footnote C: "The basic Drop Weapon item works on figures with ST less than 20; the 2-power version works on any ST."

Page 30: My "cost of magical items" example is misleading. It was a calculation of the price the wizards would have charged for their

work. However, it was NOT the "fair market value" of the coronet. Fair market value assumes the wizards worked in the most efficient way – and these did not.

Fair market value would be correctly figured thus: Jeweled coronet: $15,000. Add Telepathy spell: $20,000. Add Iron Flesh, doubled cost: $32,000. Subtotal with two spells: $67,000. Add 20% of this, since Control Person is an "E" spell: $13,400. Add Control Person (quadrupled cost): $40,000. Add Reverse Missiles (octupled cost): another $40,000. Total value: $160,400.

Page 31. Apparent pasteup error. If the "Multiply Enchanted Item" rules is read at the beginning of page 30 the rules are more clear.

Page 34. Some lines have been omitted from the WORD OF COMMAND explanation. Starting with the fourth line from the bottom, try "ALREADY unaffected by the Word, merely to tip it over or turn its face to the wall."

Page 38: Usually when an arrow is enchanted, the actual spell is cast only on the arrowHEAD. Otherwise the spell could be nullified merely by breaking off the arrow shaft.

Page 39. Apparent pasteup error. The last paragraph, "Thrown Spells," is a duplicate of a paragraph in *Advanced Melee*, p. 14. The two paragraphs above it, RECOVERING LOST STRENGTH, duplicate paragraphs on p. 25 of that booklet. If it was intended that these rules be repeated (maybe not a bad idea, at least for the ST rules), another location would have been clearer.

TOLLENKAR'S LAIR

The pages of this game were not numbered. I have numbered mine beginning with the first right-hand inside page as 1. This makes the last page (inside back cover) 17.

Page 1. Pasteup error. Delete the line "OK starting with 'Beginning characters.' " It was apparently intended as a note to the pasteup artist. It has nothing to do with the game.

Page 9. Figure 4-1 could be misleading about the blunderbuss' effect. Place the blunderbuss in the center hex of megahex B and figure its effective range as given above.

Page 9. *Advanced Wizard* is also useful for Level 5.

Page 9. Second column should begin "Ten hand-picked killers mount guard here . . . "

Pages 16-17. By all means, use colored pencils on the map.

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Painting Fantasy Miniatures

By Kevin Hendryx

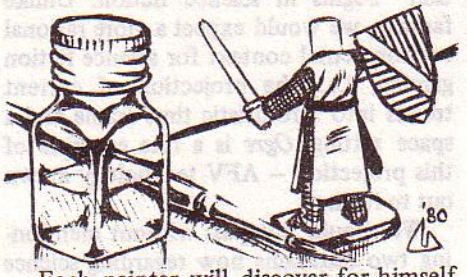
Part I: The Tools

Almost every gamer who possesses fantasy miniature figures yearns to see his collection beautifully and faultlessly painted. And almost every one of these enthusiasts can see this dream realized, provided they are willing to invest the required amount of time, effort, and money. Like many other artistic skills, (and I must emphasize from the start that miniature painting is both an art and a skill), the painting of wargame figures is a talent that can be acquired by any person of sufficient drive. The hours spent huddled over a cluttered table in an unused corner breathing in various toxic vapors will not only sharpen one's creative abilities, but will also steady the hand, feed the old artistic ego, and produce myriads of majestic metal warriors. Of course, you may lose half your sight, develop semi-permanent paint-markings on your fingers, and spend your spare afternoons rummaging through the paint racks of hobby shops looking for some obscure but crucial shade of Seaweed Green. Still, every action has its reaction, and the ill-effects of miniature painting are surely less self-destructive than those of, say, sky-diving, or hunting wild boar with javelins. At least the latest Government report does not link wargaming with cancer – yet.

The first step in the miniature painting process is preparation. This is a very important undertaking, especially for those new to miniatures, and involves several procedures. If you are a beginner, the first decision you are faced with is the selection of your equipment: paint, brushes, and other tools of the trade.

Paints and brushes are by far the most vital parts of your workshop. Even Michelangelo couldn't paint that 25mm Hobbit if his paintbrush had its bristles sticking out at all angles like a porcupine, and looked like it had been recently excavated from Pompeii. Buy several brushes of differing size, at least three or four (I'm working with ten at the present). The thickest should be no more than a size 2, and the others size 1, 0, or 00. The thicker brushes can be used for covering large, unbroken surfaces, such as horses, cloaks, animal pelts, and oversize monsters, while the smaller ones are used for most of your standard painting, and the very thinnest for fine lines and other minute but desirable details. Any good watercolor or oil paintbrushes should do, though bristles made from red sable are recommended. Choose your brushes with care; reject any that have loose, bent, ot uneven bristles. When you have bought them, carefully pluck out any bristles that stick out from the rest. It is also a good idea to trim the end with a razor blade to insure an even point.

The only item that poses more problems than paintbrushes are the paints themselves. Most modeling paints are either gloss paints or flat (matte) paints. Gloss paints tend to be tough after drying and have a shiny, ceramic-like finish. Flats are easier to work with and give a more realistic finish. The majority of miniaturists employ flat paints, though one can use glossy paints and apply a clear, matte aftercoat when dry to dull the shine. This is helpful when a particular shade is unavailable in flats and you do not wish to mix one yourself.



Each painter will discover for himself which brand of paint he favors and the number of colors he needs. It is perfectly acceptable to use enamel-based (cleans with thinner) and water-based (cleans with water) paints interchangeably. Many painters are compelled to do so anyway, if they are to have all the different colors they need. Testors, Pactra, and Humbrol of England are among the most popular and readily-available enamel paints, and each line has a selection of both gloss and flat paints. Humbrol is the most expensive of the three, but its color range is quite authentic and professional. Of the water-based paints, the new line introduced by The Armoury is of excellent quality. All their paints are flats and are available in a wide range of colors, including three shades of flesh and some of the more hard-to-find colors such as platinum, metallic black-gold, and mud.

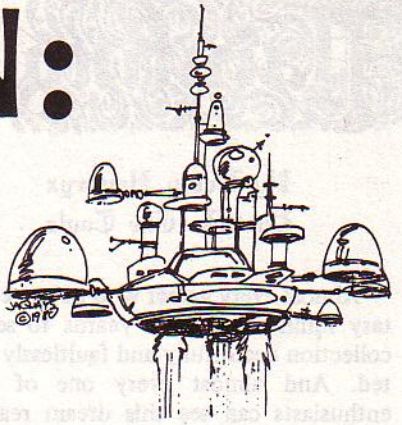
As time goes by and your painting interests and ambitions expand, your paint collection will multiply itself several times and you may find yourself with colors from half a dozen manufacturers. One can never have enough different shades of green and brown, it seems, to complete that Elven host, or you will have a bottle of dark mustard-yellow reserved *specifically* for the slanted eyes of Kobolds and Orcs. Such specialization is all well and good, and does much to lend a note of individualism to your figures. Colors that are absolutely indispensible for the fantasy miniaturist will include flesh (whatever tone you prefer, but avoid the extremes – choose something between Californian Tan and Anaemic), all the primary and secondary colors and their light and dark shades, and the obligatory white, black, and browns (at least four of the latter). For the skins of Orcs, Goblins, Ogres, and other non-human beasties, make a selection of various greens, greys, yellows, and browns. For metallic colors, be sure to include steel or iron for painting most kinds of armor, as well as gold, silver, copper, bronze, and brass. Don't forget thinner for your enamel paints, or clear flat if you anticipate having to use any gloss colors.

So much for the prime requirements. Other items you may need, according to necessity ot individual whim, are metal files and utility or X-Acto knives for scoring; rags for cleaning your brushes; a water dish for water-based paints, if any; pliers for hard-to-open lids; a ruler for measuring stands, flags, or standards you have to make yourself; strong cements for gluing on weapons, shields, etc.; and a supply of toothpicks, both for stirring up a particularly thick paint and for touching up a figure if you make a mistake. It's often easier to cover up a small smear or dot of paint by toothpick than to dirty up a brush (this also saves on the usual wear and tear a brush endures each time it is cleaned).

Once you have assembled the components of your painting workshop and your figures, you are ready to make the heady transition from mere gamer to *artiste*.

Next month: Painting Techniques.

GAME DESIGN: Theory and Practice



by Schuessler and Jackson

Fantasy, Science Fiction, and Looking Forward

Fantasy and science fiction are fairly new themes in wargaming, although their roots go back to the hypothetical titles beginning with *Tactics II.* In recent years, this sub-genre has experienced extraordinary growth and development.

While there were certainly earlier science fiction games, we might choose Howard Thompson's *Stellar Conquest* (1974) as a starting point. Thompson earns the kudo because both *Stellar Conquest* and its parent company, Metagaming, have survived long enough to achieve respectability.

Stellar Conquest is basically a production game. Both the combat and production system are especially interesting in that they allow players to buy new levels of technology, as well as paying the usual costs for the hardware available. Different types of planets provide different types of resources, which affect the development of the planet and the points available for production.

Avalon Hill followed with *Starship Trooper* (from the book by Robert Heinlein) and demonstrated the pitfalls of trying to make a book into a game. SPI followed its usual pattern by flooding the market with science fiction titles.

The growth in science fiction can be largely explained by the growing interest in s-f literature that occured during the 60's. Authors like Bradbury and Heinlein were baptized as respectable by the English departments, and (unwittingly) a whole generation of potential customers was created, compliments of your local university.

Since its emergence, science fiction wargames have been going through the "shaking out" process that World War II games went through in the early 70's. First, a proliferation of titles as everybody gets on the bandwagon. Second, good sales as those with an interest buy up everything connected with the subject. Third, a growing sophistication as the customers get burned with sloppy or repititive designs. And fourth, a contraction as the three or four well-managed publishers take over the market.

Besides the "shaking out," the science fiction market has faced a number of other problems – some large, some small. Designers are still trying to find a combat system that is as futuristic as the themes being developed in the non-combat portions of the game. Oftentimes it seems that the combat is warmed-over World War II naval, with names changed for flavoring. In mapping and scale, the depiction of the three-dimensional nature of space travel and combat still needs work.

Acceptance of science fiction by the traditional, World War II-dominated gamers has been mixed. The most intelligent reaction has been to adapt the science fiction design features that "fit" back into conventional game design. In other cases, the more conventional crowd has asked some interesting questions about where the "science" ends and the "fiction" begins in science fiction. Unlike fantasy, we would expect a more rational environmental context for science fiction gaming, i.e., the projection of current trends into a futuristic time frame and a space setting. *Ogre* is a fine example of this projection – AFV technology drawn out to its limit.

We should not pass without mentioning two criticisms now regarding science fiction. The first has to do with my last point. There seems to be a tendency to blur the distinction between science fiction and fantasy, a sort of "Pigs in Space" syndrome. Part of this trend is attributable to *Star Wars,* of course, while another part is simply the game designer looking for new settings for a fantasy theme. In my opinion, the inherent strength of science fiction is its ability to keep a toe firmly implanted in reality. Certainly Kubrick's space shuttle was all the more impressive for having "PanAm" painted on the outside.

And some critics would simply reject science fiction as a suitable topic for wargaming. Given our definition, it is possible for any given science fiction entry to either be or not be a wargame. The military tradition in s-f literature is as extensive as, say, in the colonial experience of Central Africa. To allow one and deny the other is at least arbitrary, and it tends to retard the cross-fertilization that can benefit all groups.

Growing up alongside SF gaming, and usually mentioned in the same breath, is fantasy. Most fantasy games are of the role-playing genre, thanks to ***Dungeons and Dragons*** *(1974), designed by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. D&D was sloppy and confusing. It was also a brilliant idea and an instant hit. In one stroke we had the first large-selling fantasy game, and the first role-playing game. There have been a few "fantasy board games" without role-playing, but for the most part, fantasy games have been an attempt to re-do D&D...better.*

Fantasy gaming also spawned the concept of the "supplement" – a piece of material, useless in itself, to expand the original game. The first supplements were designed by TSR to fill the holes in the original D&D. Later supplements were in the nature of variants. Now manufacturers are producing supplements for each other's games, and even supplements that can adapt to a variety of games. The field continues to grow.

The fantasy group seems to encounter all the problems of science fiction and some additional ones as well. We find the same expansionist trends and the same "shaking out" process. The cross-fertilization is present: the role-playing aspects of games like *Dungeons and Dragons* have forced the historical designers to consider psychological factors, and may move them away from their preoccupation with hardware. Altogether a healthy development.

In fantasy, the strength of its appeal also shaped its potential weakness. The designer is largely free of restrictions in approaching the game, either historical references of the "projections" implied in science fiction. Thus, he may give full vent to his imagination. However, this freedom (as always) exacts a price.

First, the demand for internal consistency is much greater. We can explain away the improbability of a Stalingrad because it really happened; in the self-contained environment of a fantasy design, the explanations come a bit harder. There is a demand that the inconsistencies be consistent. In short, because fantasy is a completely artificial thing, we want it to be neater – less messy – than reality. Oscar Wilde would certainly approve.

But not all fantasy is completely artificial. With magic or dragons, you can do pretty much as you like – but swords and clubs perform in known ways. A fantasy designer who ignores the realities of ancient/medieval combat will hear complaints, just as if he'd messed up the order of battle in a Civil War game. Where fantasy corresponds with an ancient reality, it must be true to that reality. Furthermore, fantasy gaming is based on an existing body of ***literature*** *(dragons are greedy, dwarves are short, barbarians are mighty, etc.). To contradict these cliches without explanation is to court rejection.*

The second point reflects a more puritanical (and commercial) streak. Fantasy games must present much more raw entertainment than their historical counterparts. This is not a criticism, but simply a factor that the designer must recognize. A tedious historical simulation can be rationalized as "study." I can remember being told that studying Latin or playing chess "developed the capacity for problem solving" and other nonsense. Perhaps the day will come when we can make similar claims for *Empire of the Petal Throne.*

Where fantasy and science fiction are "going" is a favorite topic of discussion these days. Their emergence has been sudden and spectacular in some ways. In other ways, this sub-genre is a continuation of the wargaming trend toward "diversity" (if you're a gamer) or "fragmentation" (if you're a game publisher). It's been apparent for some time that certain themes get more attention than others. As the hobby grows, however, the increasing market allows for greater specialization of offerings. So the question is not really where science fiction and fantasy are "going." They've already "gone" – to where the bucks are, to that slice of the market that wants its primary topic of interest undiluted.

The real question today – the one not being asked – is how long it will be before those other market slices (Civil War, Napoleonics, Ancients, etc.) diversify or fragment along similar lines.

Design Developments of the 70's

As the 70's closed, we could be pretty well satisfied with the decade. Wargaming had not come all that far in the fundamentals; we were still working with the cardboard squares on the hex grid, still using a die and a matrix CRT. However, within that framework there had occured a tremendous refinement and enhancement. Wargame design was looser, more flexible, and more receptive to innovation.

SPI is due a certain amount of credit for this progress. Their strategy of multiplying game titles to undreamed – of numbers insured that new techniques would be tried. After all, sixty games all using the same rules and CRT – well, the word would get around. This "trial and error" approach (try anything at least once) was good for everybody, except the suckers who shelled out bucks for the "errors" instead of the "trials."

But the rule at SPI is that eventually they'll get it right, no matter how many titles it takes. Thus, in recent years it has been a truism that your best buy was SPI's last entry in a given series. No doubt their contribution to wargame design has been significant. It remains to be seen whether too high a price has been exacted in customer confidence.

One of the more critical developments of the 70's was the interest in map scale. In the old Avalon Hill system, if you didn't want to attack, you had to leave a hex between yourself and the other guy. When a map scale was applied, we realized that "no man's land" was 20 to 40 miles wide – obviously an anomaly.

As the scale was rationalized, the idea of the flexible ZOC was possible. Being in a ZOC no longer required an attack, but did hamper movement. Today, the manipulation of the ZOC, between rigid and flexible, is one of the more interesting technical areas in wargame design.

The CRT was also revolutionized in the 70's, both in its range and in the sophistication of its results. The AH table stopped at 6–1. Today, upper limits of 12–1 are common; at the same time, the D–Elim is giving away to step reductions, or even reduction by single combat strength points. Over the decade, the game research kept showing that killing whole units just wasn't that easy, and the designs eventually incorporated this research into the CRT.

With larger CRT, the idea of modifying the die roll or the column used began to displace the practice of modifying the combat strengths on the counters. Part of this trend was simply practical. In dealing with counter combat strengths, you are pretty well limited to "doubling" or "halving" in penalties or rewards for terrain, facing, weather, and the like. Telling some guy that he's being penalized 25% when his counter strength is "7" instead of "8" gets some wholly unprintable reactions. Moving columns to the right or left, or adding or subtracting to/from the die roll, allows for more "shading" of results.

In another important area, we've pulled back a bit from our preoccupation with the numbers. The use of a second movement phase for mechanized units by SPI in their WWII divisional-level series recognized that there are qualitative differences between units, no matter what the number say. This trend has expanded, and the development was of critical importance in modern simulations, where the specialists play such an important role.

Production and logistics finally came into their own during the 70's. *War in the East* gave us a workable production system, and *War in the Pacific* carried the logistics out to a logical extreme. Some mutter that *Campaign in North Africa* (Richard Berg's answer to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*) carried logistics beyond its logical extreme. At the operational and tactical levels, the main developments have been morale,

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leadership, and the manipulation of the play sequence. In the old days, when all we had was *PanzerBlitz*, you either fired or moved. Now we get play sequences like fire, move, enemy fire, fire – and so on. Mostly this preoccupation with play sequence is an attempt to deal with the simultaneity of tactical action, and the problem remains unsolved.

The Outlook for the 80's

Predicting trends is an uncomfortable business; I always remember the guy who said that electricity would be too cheap to be metered. With that disclaimer, we'll offer a number of timid suggestions about wargame design in the next ten years.

The first and safest prediction concerns the computer. Everybody in wargaming is talking computers, and I have no doubt that the hobby will ride along with the general trend to the "home computer." At the risk of being contrary, I will predict that the computer will never displace the paper-cardboard hand-operated game. Cost differential is one reason. The second is that the home computer won't be able to match the sophistication of the "big" games for some time to come, if ever.

In the near term, I would expect to see the computer used in conjunction with paper games for record-keeping and the like. Thus, instead of combat strength printed on the counter, we'll have an identification number. The computer will maintain the number of tanks, vehicles, men, morale, ammunition, etc. associated with that ID number. Losses can then be tracked in much smaller increments, and the whole nightmare of logistics and support can be simulated without the heartache. These are the things that the computer does best.

Later, we can begin to let the computer compare units, resolve combat, and take the losses automatically. However, even here, we're talking (so I'm told) about some sharp programming and a lot of memory.

Certainly we'll see the day with a full map display on the CRT and the computer doing everything except the moving. But I have a feeling that these games will be extremely simple-minded compared to, say, *Squad Leader*.

The computer will phase in too slowly for many of us, but it will come. It will account for a significant part of the market, but it will coexist with the large and small paper games we have now.

In terms of conventional game design, I see a continuation of the movement to operational and tactical gaming. My reasons for this are sort of simple-minded. The big, divisional level stuff has pretty well been done, and done about as well as possible inside the paper-game format. We have World War II, World War I, and the Civil War at the divisional level with production and all the trimmings. We still need some entries going back in history, and the fantasy and science fiction groups are still open to the big, large-unit formats, simply because of their open-ended themes.

Quite simply, there are still many more themes to be developed at the "big battle" (Gettysburg, Stalingrad, etc.) level. These operational themes also allow for a variety of approaches, from a very large format to very small, and the designer can shift emphasis and offer a new game on an old subject. We can all grit our teeth as the 27th version of the Battle of the Bulge is released in 1987.

At the tactical level, the number of situations available to the designer is virtually infinite. Most tactical scenarios are composites anyway; they nearly have to be to give the scenario balance or to account for the abstracted terrain.

While the tactical and operational levels offer the greatest scope for theme development, they also offer opportunities in experimentation of game design. For example, the question of unit facing needs more work. The concept of stacking is another fertile area. Most games allow stacking, but the position of the counter within the stack means nothing. However, we could use the composition of the stack to depict the arrangement of units within the hex, i.e., the "top" counter is "up front."

The move toward greater terrain differentation has already started, and I expect it to continue. The days of when "clear," "woods," "hills," and "towns" were the sum total of terrain are simply gone. Other theorists argue that extensive terrain differentation "nets out" in play; therefore, why go to the trouble if the effect is even? They're probably right, but we don't wargame in the aggregate, but rather move by move, and combat by combat. And the different terrain types make these smaller components more accurate – to say nothing of more entertaining.

In short, tactical and operational play is where the action will be for the next few years. Some of us will continue to fiddle with *War in Europe*, but the new titles will be dominated by platoon-to-regiment equivalent games, offered in the large or small formats.

Finally, I would like to offer some very subjective opinions on the future of the industry. For a number of good and bad reasons, the days of domination by the big two – SPI and Avalon Hill – seem to be numbered. We are near a replay of 1970, when Avalon Hill needed some shaking up, and SPI was there. Now we have two companies with about 90% of the market between them, and, again, some shaking up seems to be in order.

A signal that the tremor is coming shows up in design work and marketing techniques, just as it did in 1970. The really innovative stuff is coming from the little guys – not the big guys – just as was the case ten years ago. The big guys are now reacting, when their market share and resource base should put them way out in front, if they were going where their customers are. Part of this is, I think, built in. As a company grows, it acquires an administrative overhead that leaves it less and less responsive. The smaller, more flexible firms react faster and begin to nibble at the market share.

So I look for a "big five" instead of a "big two" in the 80's. Maybe we can catch up with the oil companies and have "seven sisters" instead. Whatever. The hobby will grow to where we can support more than two majors, and more than the current half-dozen minors.

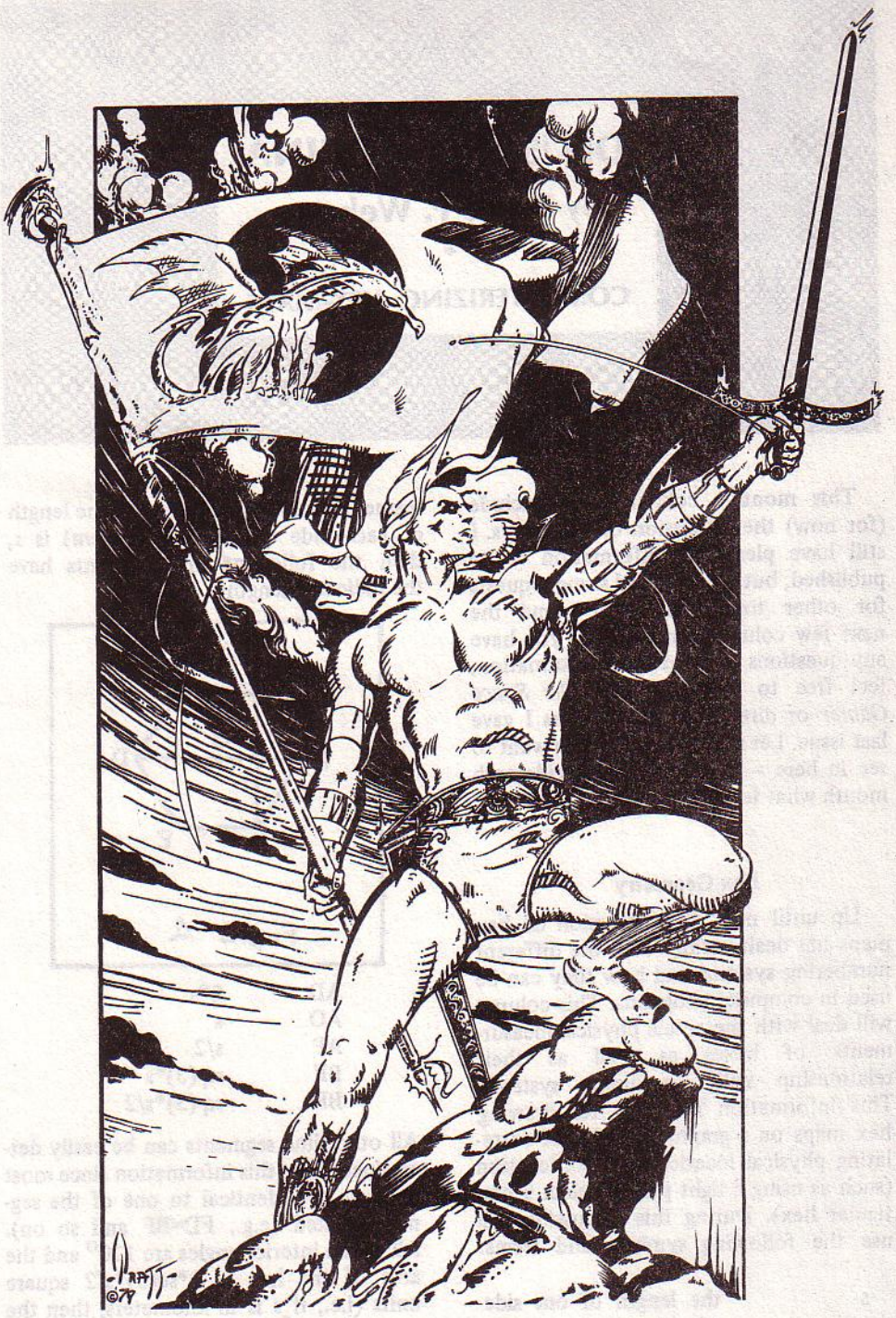
I started gaming in the early 60's; *Tactics II* was my first game. My involvement has been an off-and-on affair. Looking back, I notice that nobody talks of a "golden age" in wargaming, and for good reason. It hasn't happened yet. In the 60's the market was being developed. In the 70's, the focus switched to design. Both decades were teething peroids (different teeth) with large doses of frustration, disappointment, and confusion. If we're going to have a "golden age," it should happen in the 80's. Gamers are smarter, better educated, and know better what they want. The competition for market share will get sharper, and the gamer will be the main beneficiary. It's going to get close to impossible to unload a dud. I envy the guy who is buying his first wargame today.

This ends the historical portion of the series. Next issue, we get back to the basics of game design, with Maps and Movement.

FEATURED REVIEW:

Farewell To Crane

by Forrest Johnson



To: His Majesty, the High Kinglord of Crane
From: Forest, Chief of the Elkhound Tribe, Servant of the Grand Union, Fellow of the Grand Alliance

May the Only defend Your Majesty.

A year ago, when my war tribe first roamed the plains of Crane, I had a hundred warriors, a hundred gold and fifty goats. Twenty turns later, I now have over 400 warriors, 800 goats, more than 100 war hawks, two mighty fortresses, two rich businesses, and a fleet of 28 arks and a heavy galley. The Elkhound tribe has almost all the published information sheets about the planet of Crane, and a considerable collection of gold and other tokens. We are acknowledged expert at Flying, Seamanship, Metallurgy, Medicine, and Creature Capture Techniques. We fight with Fire Bombs, Glyptodon Armor, Steam Guns and Tasers, as well as with the commonly-known weapons. We have never been defeated in battle.

Therefore, it may surprise Your Majesty to learn that I am leaving Crane forever.

Why? Why does a candle with two wicks burn twice as bright and half as long? Assuming I stayed, what would I do? Gather more warriors, more war hawks, more fortresses? What for? Things are quiet where I am, as in most of Crane. Should I start more businesses? That would be trading real money for gold tokens. Should I do more research? No. Technology is limited. With surpassing ingenuity, I can build steam guns, but not steam engines; tasers, but not electric generators. Technology is whatever you can talk the gamemaster into, but new technology is pointless if the GM is not sophisticated enough to deal with it.

Of course, I could conspire to become a Kinglord or Shaman and by your grace rule a whole city. But that would be adding a third wick to the candle. Political leaders don't seem to last long. Where is Deersur, who crushed six barbarian tribes in the Serried Mountains? Where is his enemy, imperious Sui-Len-Roc?

Yours is the largest open-ended correspondence game around. But how open is it when an inexperienced GM appraises your turn, so that a sophisticated special action comes back marked simply "noted," or ignored altogether? How open is it when a different GM handles every turn, so the elaborate preparations of a previous turn are forgotten? The more involved a player is in Crane, the more frustrated he becomes.

Should I go on, knowing I may never equal what I have already achieved? No. I have overstayed. I have been a year in Crane and I am old.

I am clearing out my files. My sundry vassals and chattels I leave to the care of my brothers in the Grand Alliance. It is time for the hot-blooded new tribes to fight their battles, scheme their schemes, win their glory.

Farewell.

It was fun.

Your Servant,
Forest of the Elkhounds

THE TRIBES OF CRANE is a correspondence game run by Schubel & Son, POB 214848, Sacramento, CA 95821. The entry fee is $10.00, which includes a rule book and the first three turns. Regular turns are $2.50 and up. A rule book may be purchased separately for $3.50.

DEUS EX MACHINA

by Bruce F. Webster

* * *

COMPUTERIZING HEX-MAPS

This month's column will conclude (for now) the discussion of hex maps. I still have plenty of information to be published, but I've received some requests for other topics, and will spend the next few columns on those. If you have any questions or want more information, feel free to write me c/o *The Space Gamer* or directly to the address I gave last issue. Let me know what you want to see in here -- it helps me to decide each month what to write.

Hex Geometry

Up until now, the discussion on hex maps has dealt mainly with the different numbering systems and how they can be used in computer programs. This column will deal with the actual physical measurments of hexes as well as their relationship with coordinate systems. This information is handy for drawing hex maps on a graphics display or correlating physical location and hex location (such as using a light pen to select a particular hex). During this discussion, I'll use the following symbols and terms:

s	the length of one side of a hex.
DX,DY	the differences between the XX and YY components of two given hexes, Hex 1 and Hex 2.
dx,dy	the differences between the x and y components of two given points, (x1, y1) and (x2, y2).
sq(. . .)	the square root of the expression inside.

Geometry of a single hex. Figure 1 shows a hexagon with a few extra line segments drawn in. Given that the length of each side (AB, BC, *et cetera*) is *s*, then the following line segments have the indicated lengths:

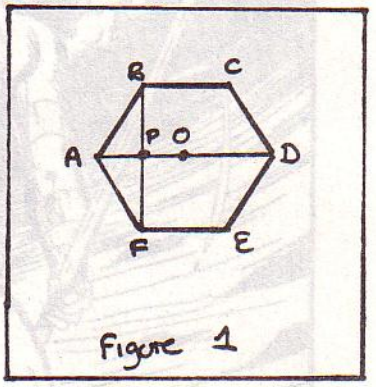


Figure 1

AD	2*s
AO	s
AP	s/2
BF	sq (3)*s
BP	sq (3)*s/2

All other line segments can be easily determined from this information since most of them are identical to one of the segments listed (e.g., FD=BF and so on). All of the interior angles are 120° and the area of the hex is 3*sq(3)*s/2 square units (i.e., if s is in kilometers, then the area is in km^2). So much for single hexes.

Geometry of adjacent hexes. Figure 2 shows some adjacent hexes with a few line segments drawn in. Given, as before, that the hex sides are of length s, then the line segment lengths are as follows:

OW	3*s/2
OX	sq (3)*s
OY	3*s
OZ	2*sq (3)*s

The angle YOW is 60° and the angle XOW is 30°.

The difference in length between OY and OZ gives a clue to the amount of distortion involved in using hex maps. They both represent a movement of two hexes but OY is about 13% shorter than OZ. The distortion isn't that serious and tends to even out over the course of a game; it's just part of the price paid for a simplified movement system.

Coordinate translation. The following discussion assumes that the MG (Metagaming) style of hex numbering (see TSG 27) is being used and that the coordinate point associated with a particular hex is located in the center of that hex (point "O" in Figures 1 and 2). It demonstrates the relationship between two numbered hexes and their physical separation.

Cartesian translation: given Hex 1 with center (x1, y1) and Hex 2, find center (x2, y2) of Hex 2. This problem can be restated as finding the difference (dx, dy) between the centers of the two hexes, since x2 = x1 + dx and y2 = y1 + dy. Defining DX and DY as given at the start of this column and assuming a hex side of length s, then

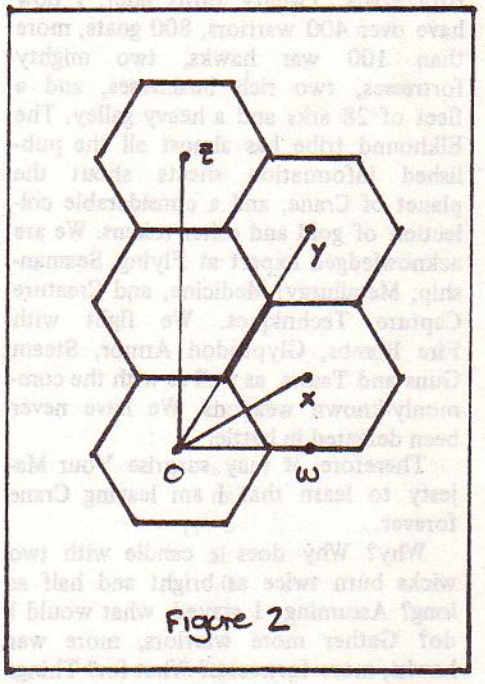


Figure 2

dx = 3*s*(DX -- DY)/2 and
dy = sq (3)*s*(DX + DY)/2

The inverse of this relationship can be used to determine in which hex a particular point is located:

DX = dx/(3*s) + dy/(sq (3)*s)
DY = -dx/(3*s) + dy/(sq (3)*s)

In most cases, this will give non-integer values for DX and DY, indicating that you're *not* right on the center of a given hex. I've developed an algorithm for determining just what hex you're in, but it's too lengthy to give in full here, so I'll just summarize it. Briefly, you can generate four possible hex numbers by useing the integer values just higher and lower than DX and DY. You can then determine the center coordinates of each of those hexes and (with the geometry

information given earlier) define the boundaries between the hexes involved. A series of comparisons of the coordinates of the given point with these boundries allows you to determine which hex the point is actually in. If you can't figure it out from this, drop me a line and I'll send you a copy of my notes.

Polar translation: the center of hex 2 can also be found using the sum of two vectors, Vx and Vy, where

Vx = (r*DX, 120°),
Vy = (r*DY, 240°), and
r = sq (3)*s.

This translation can be very useful in any "turtle graphics" system, where pen location is described by angle rotations and distances of movement. The theory behind this translation method is simple: just envision it as moving DX hexes along the hexrow in which only the XX component changes and then moving DY hexes along the hexrow in which only the YY component changes.

Most Direct Path Algorithm

This algorithm was originally part of my first column on hex maps, but was cut because of lack of space. Using the MG style of hex numbering this will actually trace the most direct path (ignoring terrain) between two hexes. The following definitions are in effect: XX1 and YY1 are the XX and YY components of Hex 1; the function dist(Hex 1, Hex 2) returns the distance in hexes between Hex 1 and Hex 2; DX and DY are defined as above; cX, cY, tX and tY are real (non-integer) numbers; the function round(x) returns the integer closest to x (and is equivalent to int(x + 0. 5)).

```
BEGIN
  read (Hex1, Hex2) ; (*calculations for
XX1, YY1, DX, DY not shown*)
  IF dist(Hex1, Hex2) = 0 THEN stop;
    (*same hex!*)
  cX : = XX1;
  cY : = YY1;
  tX : = DX/dist(Hex1,Hex2) ;
  tY : = DY/dist(Hex1,Hex2) ;
  write (Hex1) ;
  REPEAT
    cX : = cX + tX ;
    cY : = cY + tY ;
    XX: = round(cX) ;
    YY: = round(cY) ;
    Hex: = 100*XX + YY ;
    print (Hex)
  UNTIL (Hex = Hex2)
END.
```

That's all there is to it. Next time (probably) : using programmable calculators in gaming.

FREE THE HOSTAGES!

Ten humans, including the beautiful Delilah, are being held hostage by the High Tollah. Who are the High Tollah? They're fiends who are secreted in a moon base, in the star system of Rigel, on the fringe of human-occupied space. Their leader, Sha Tollah, was deposed. And rather than face the Tollah's revenge for his excesses while in power, he took refuge in the Stellar Union. In a fit of vengeful fury, the Tollah grabbed the humans off the planet of Ultima Thule and are holding out for an exchange—return the Sha Tollah or the humans will die, including Delilah.

You'll rescue the hostages and have Delilah for your very own in this exciting REALTIME computer game from Automated Simulations. You'll destroy armed aliens and hostile creatures in an unexplored environment—60 chambers in the convoluted layers of the Tollah moon base. Find the rooms in which each hostage is held. Find Delilah.

But HURRY! Your vital powerpack is being depleted and you still have to beam each hostage up to your gunboat in orbit.

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Ask your dealer or rush $19.95 (for cassette) or $24.95 (for TRS-80 or APPLE disk) to us. Please add $1.00 shipping and handling. California residents add 6% sales tax. Be sure to tell us if you have a PET 32K, TRS-80 16K or APPLE 48K (APPLESOFT). Or, call our FANTASY LINE toll free, 800-824-7888, Operator 861 to order and to tell us what other fantasies you would like to touch. (California, 800-852-7777, Operator 861).

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SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY GAME MAGAZINE SURVEY

by Steve Jackson

As we've all noted with glee, fantasy and SF wargaming is growing. A field that was unheard of ten years ago, and was a despised sub-class even five years ago, now has adherents – and magazines – everywhere. There are so many publications for the fantasy/SF gamer, in fact, that it's easy to lose track. And none of us has so much money that he can afford to waste it.

Some four months ago, TSG sent a questionnaire to every "professional" game magazine, as well as a couple of borderline cases, asking certain basic questions about content, philosophy, circulation, and pricing. Follow-up questionnaires were sent last month to those few that didn't reply the first time. Eventually, most magazines answered.

The data in the first paragraph of each review is drawn from these questionnaires – or, for the magazines that didn't reply, from what published material was available. I have repeated exactly what was supplied to me, without editing. I have my doubts (for instance) about some of the circulation figures offered . . . *Caveat emptor.*

The remainder of each review represents my own personal criticism and opinion, based on several years of journalistic experience and a rather close involvement with the gaming hobby. I've done my best to be fair – and not just because I'm either lawful or good. An unduly harsh review would (justly!) offend potential advertisers and leave me open to charges that I was sandbagging the competition. An undeservedly good comment might send people out to buy a turkey. It's definitely a fine line to walk; there have been a few times when I regretted taking on this project. But on the whole, it's been fun, going through all my back files again. I hadn't realized, myself, just how many magazines there were.

ARES, published by Simulations Publications, Incorporated. Bi-monthly; $3 per issue, $14/six issues. Founded March 1980. Circulation: 9,000. Editor: Redmond A. Simonsen.

This is SPI's much-publicized entry in the SF/fantasy game field. Beset (on the one hand) with complaints from historical purists who resented science fiction in *Strategy & Tactics* and *Moves*, and (on the other) with demands from the ever-growing fantasy/SF market, SPI simply split off a new magazine.

ARES' unique feature, and the justification for the $3 cover price, is the old SPI "game in every issue" gimmick. A complete game with ready-to-use components (including multi-color map and die-cut components) is included in every copy of ARES. Each issue also contains a couple of fantasy or science fiction stories, some science fact material, gaming commentary, reviews, etc.

This is a very attractive magazine, but it has some real problems. The kindest assumption would be that, after only two issues, ARES still has some "shaking down" to go through. It's an *interesting* magazine, but it's not yet the magazine SPI has been advertising. The fiction is not game-related; the science-fact articles have been of only peripheral use; the two games presented thus far have been overwritten and unexceptional. The overall format, for good or ill, is NOT like that of any other magazine on the market.

The moral here may be: It is easy to say you'll put out a magazine that appeals equally to gamers and fantasy/SF readers. It's harder to do it.

ARES is looking for "fiction, historical analyses of the genres, game articles, and science fact pieces". Contact them at 257 Park Avenue South, NY, NY 10010.

DIFFERENT WORLDS, published by The Chaosium. Bi-monthly; $2.25 per issue, or $10.50 for six issues. Founded in February 1979. Circulation: 2,500. Editor: Tadashi Ehara.

This magazine drew its name from its main objective: to publish, each issue, some skilled gamemaster's notes on his own "world." Not a bad idea at all, though some of the articles have been better than others.

DIFFERENT WORLDS deals almost exclusively with role-playing games – usually, but not always, fantasy. There are letters, variants, reviews, and tables. Too many tables, in fact. The chief weakness of DW is its tendency to publish multi-page articles consisting mostly of boring charts and tables. Other than this, most of the material presented is good. DW has not given in to the temptation to "showcase" its own publisher's games and ignore all others.

The other off-beat feature here is the "Letter from Gigi." The mysterious Gigi never appears in person, but can be contacted through the editor. Her column of gaming gossip, news, gossip, speculation, gossip, guesses, gossip, and catty remarks has caused a great deal of irritation at times – but it's fun to read.

DIFFERENT WORLDS is interested strictly in material on role-playing games. Payment is one cent a word for articles, $20/page for art. Contact them at Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706.

THE DRAGON, published by TSR Publications. Monthly; $3 per issue, $24 for 12 issues. Founded June 1976. Circulation: 16,500. Editor: Jake Jaquet.

THE DRAGON is a paradox. The largest magazine of its type (both in page count and in circulation), it often seems to have a rather low average quality of material. There are two reasons for this. The first: TD really *does* run more than its share of amateur and/or terribly boring stuff. The second reason? The average DRAGON is nearly twice the size of most other SF/fantasy game magazines...and is one of the few to come out monthly. If not every article is a hand-polished jewel, one can understand! The net *amount* of high-quality material in TD is nothing to be ashamed of.

By far the greatest emphasis is on *Dungeons and Dragons* material, but there is much less of this than there once was. TSR games and *Traveller* get most of the space that D&D doesn't. This seems to be due more to a shortage of contributions than any editorial bias; a magazine can't print what it's not sent. Avalon Hill, Metagaming, Flying Buffalo, and the other publishers in the field have all come in for TD writeups from time to time.

Exceptional DRAGON features include an occasional game (maybe the counters have to be mounted before you can play, but *The Awful Green Things from Outer Space* was more fun than anything SPI has published recently). There are continuing comic strips (some are a total waste of space, but "Wormy" and "Fineous Fingers" are excellent). And there are "official" rule clarifications and changes from the designers of D&D.

In general, material is strongly weighted toward fantasy and/or role-playing. Science fiction gets its share of coverage, and there is an occasional computer article. Payment for articles averages $20 per printed page. Art rates "vary widely; we aren't stingy." Contact THE DRAGON at Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

THE DUNGEONEER and THE JUDGES' GUILD JOURNAL, both published by the Judges Guild. Bi-monthly (they alternate months); $2.80 per issue. Subscriptions: (to either magazine) $15/6 issues, $29/12 issues. Founding dates and circulation unknown (the questionnaires were not returned by either magazine). THE JUDGES GUILD JOURNAL is edited by Chuck Anshell; THE DUNGEONEER is edited by Bryan Hinnen.

These two magazines have a common publisher, appear on alternate months, and have

basically the same format . . . so I'll consider them together. Both are large (64 pages plus cover), and totally devoted to fantasy role-playing material. Both are rather sloppily done; the Judges Guild bills them as "good fanzines." If they *are* fanzines, they're better than average. If they are considered professional, they're at the bottom of the heap, especially when the price is taken into account.

Both magazines feature complete D&D-type adventures from time to time; this is their best point. There is quite a bit of fiction – usually serialized, always amateur, rarely good. There are articles on variant systems for D&D and other fantasy games. Art runs the gamut from fully professional to embarrassingly amateur.

Contact the Guild at 1165 N. University, Decatur, IL 62526.

FLYING BUFFALO QUARTERLY, published by Flying Buffalo, Inc. Quarterly; $1.50 per issue, or four issues for $5. Founded in September 1972. Circulation: 2,000. Editor: Rick Loomis.

This is Flying Buffalo's "house organ," dealing (in general) with what FBI is doing and (specifically) with their play-by-mail games. If you are interested in Flying Buffalo, or if you play their games, you ought to look this over. It's a very little magazine, but nicely printed and written (mostly by Rick himself, I think) in an entertaining stream-of-conciousness style. Contact Flying Buffalo at Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.

THE GENERAL, published by The Avalon Hill Game Company. Bi-monthly; $2.50 per issue, $9 for 6 issues, $14 for 12 issues. Founded May 1964. Circulation: "Not allowed to divulge." Editor: Donald J. Greenwood.

THE GENERAL covers only Avalon Hill games, and does so in great detail. If you are heavily into any one AH game (or, better yet, several of them) you will enjoy this magazine. It offers detailed analyses of actual games, variants and scenarios, historical discussions, and contests–but only on the AH games. And so much of the AH line is historical that the SF/fantasy material (for *Starship Troopers, Dune, Magic Realm, Wizard's Quest)* can get buried.

Articles are bought at $6 per 10" column. Art is purchased by arrangement with the artist. Contact THE GENERAL at 4517 Hartford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214.

GRYPHON, published by Baron Publishing Company. Founded mid-1980; the first issue has yet to appear. Editor: Rudy Kraft.

Baron Publishing owns *Fire & Movement*, a small but well-done magazine devoted to historical wargaming. GRYPHON is to be their entry into the fantasy/SF/role-playing market.

As of this writing, printing and organizational difficulties have kept Issue no. 1 in limbo and reduced projected frequency from bi-monthly to quarterly. There's not much more to say as yet (they didn't return the information form). When an issue comes out, TSG will review it in full.

Contact GRYPHON c/o Baron Publishing, PO Box 820, La Puente, CA 91747.

THE JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY, published by Game Designers' Workshop. Quarterly: $2 per issue. Subscriptions: $7/year in U.S., $14/year foreign (includes airmail). Founded June 1979. Circulation: 4,500. Editor: Loren K. Wiseman.

GDW's response to our questionnaire tells it very well: "The JOURNAL is primarily directed at players of Traveller. As such, its format and contents reflect a variety of *Traveller* role-playing activities– The Beastiary (animal encounters for *Traveller*), Ship's Locker (artifacts and devices for *Traveller*) and Ref's Notes (currently concerned with Robots). In addition, the JOURNAL has coverage of new SF games and products (Just Detected) and variants of SF games (primarily GDW games)."

What we have here, then, is almost entirely a house organ . . . but it is a GOOD one. The JOURNAL is well-written and graphically excellent. Pamphlet-sized (5½" x 8½"), it is extremely valuable to anyone who plays *Traveller*, and of only marginal interest to anyone else.

Payment is approximately $5 per 600-word page; art payment varies, but it is usually $5 to $10 per piece. Contact the JOURNAL at Box 432, Normal, IL 61761.

PURSUE & DESTROY, published by First Echelon Publications, Inc. Quarterly; $1.95 per issue, $6.50 for four issues. Founded January 1975. Circulation: 1,350. Editor: Larry L. Bost.

P&D started as a fanzine, and has gradually gotten more professional. It is only marginally part of the SF/fantasy field, dealing primarily with "military history, wargames, miniatures, and current military doctrine. We occasionally dabble in SF and fantasy ... we prefer to review games that have been out for several months and that are produced by companies other than 'the big two.' We like 'oldies but goodies' from the Third World game companies."

Payment for articles is $1 per printed 10" column; art payment is negotiable. Write them at Box 26273, Charlotte, NC 28213.

SIGNAL, edited and published by John and Linda Ross-Mansfield. Single copy $.25; subscriptions: 12 copies for $3. Founding date not given. Circulation: 200.

This is a mimeographed newsletter/fanzine, usually two to three pages long. It prints game and magazine reviews (short form), company information (often press releases repeated verbatim), convention news, etc. No art, no fancy layout, no ads, just various bits of news and comment, all typed together and dropped in the mail. Coverage is general: role-playing, boardgaming, fantasy, AF, historical, miniatures, et al.

Considering the price, SIGNAL does just what it's intended to do. Contact John Mansfield at 46 Carleton St., Oromocto, NB, Canada E2V 2C8.

SORCEROR'S APPRENTICE, published by Flying Buffalo, Inc. Quarterly; $2.25 per issue, or $10 for 6 issues. Founded in late 1978. Circulation: 1,600. Editor: Liz Danforth.

This is definitely the prettiest magazine in the field. SA appears only four times a year, and its two-person staff is dedicated and talented . . . so we often see page layouts and artwork far beyond the norm for a gaming magazine.

Article quality is less even, but improving. The first issues seemed to be devoted almost exclusively to Flying Buffalo's own *Tunnels and Trolls*. Later issues have been more electric. Current wants, according to editor Danforth: "D&D rule variants would be better placed in *The Dragon*, but aside from that, almost anything goes. The greater need is for

When was the last time you commanded a Warp Force? Maybe you would rather administer the Empire or be a diplomat to alien civilizations? To win at WARP FORCE ONE you must be able to do all three!

WARP FORCE ONE is a computer-moderated correspondence game. The cost is only $2 per turn; turns will be mailed every two weeks. Rendezvous now with fifteen other players from all over the nation for an exciting game of WARP FORCE ONE!

For a rules booklet please send $1 to:

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Emprise Game Systems

articles rather than fiction . . . quality is the criterion, and the presentation of ideas or thought patterns which a gamer might be able to adapt . . . " Payment for articles varies, starting at one cent a word. Art payment varies; send a sample.

The magazine carries fiction - not always game-related, but always fantasy-oriented. SA scored coups by publishing short works by Roger Zelazny and Tanith Lee.

Other features include short news items, letters, and (often) solo adventures for T&T.

Contact SORCERER'S APPRENTICE at PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252; 602-966-4727.

THE SPACE GAMER, published by Steve Jackson. Monthly; $2 per issue. Subscriptions: 12 issues for $21, 24 issues for $39. Founded in early 1975. Circulation: 6,000. Editor: Forrest Johnson.

A caveat, for those who hadn't noticed: this article was written by the publisher of TSG, who is not entirely disinterested . . .

TSG attempts to be the "news" magazine of the field. Originally devoted mainly to science fiction gaming, it now covers SF and fantasy equally, and is expanding its coverage of computer gaming. TSG will run a short (400-word) "capsule review" of any new game or gaming product it receives. There is also an annual survey of games and publishers.

Fiction appears regularly, but it must be game-related in some way. "Straight" fantasy and SF stories may be accepted if their situations or characters can be tied to a game scenario.

Standard article payment is one cent per word; art is bought at $1 per column inch. Contact THE SPACE GAMER at Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

WHITE DWARF, published by Games Workshop (Great Britain). Bi-monthly; 75p ($2.50) per issue. U.S. subscription: 6 issues for $18 airmail. Founded June 1977. Circulation: 10,500 (mostly U.K.). Editor: Ian Livingstone.

Great Britain has many more gamers per square mile than does the United States, and WHITE DWARF is probably the most important fantasy/SF game magazine in that country; it is certainly the only one with any important circulation in the U.S.

The same general sort of material you find in any fantasy game magazine – usually well done, and with a distinctly British slant. Lots of material for D&D (and a great preoccupation with new monsters and nasty traps). A certain amount of T&T and *Traveller*. Short reviews and news items, almost all about U.S. companies. It seems that the United Kingdom is very long on gamers, but somewhat short on game companies!

WHITE DWARF often carries small but complete D&D adventures, nicely worked out and with sufficient detail that a game master in another system could translate them for his own gamers.

Article and art payment is "by negotiation" – WD pays $60 for a cover. Contact them at 1 Dalling Road, London W6, U.K.

OTHER MAGAZINES

Game magazines that (as a rule) do not concern themselves with fantasy and science fiction include:

STRATEGY & TACTICS (Simulations Publications, Inc.). Bi-monthly; $5 per issue, $16 per year. Editor: James F. Dunnigan. S&T is THE wargaming magazine in most gamers' eyes, and pioneered the "game-in-every-issue" idea. Now that SPI has started to publish *Ares*, though, S&T will probably restrict itself to articles on historical simulation gaming.

MOVES (Simulations Publications, Inc.) Bi-monthly; $2.50 per issue, $9.60 per year. Editor: Redmond A. Simonsen. MOVES is a magazine about game *design*. It once carried occasional articles on fantasy and science fiction, and may continue to do so (at least about the games published in *Ares*).

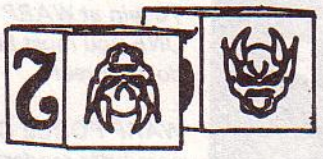
THE WARGAMER (Simulation Games). Bi-monthly; $6 per issue, $24 per year. Editor: Keith Poulter, This is another British Magazine, connected with the "World Wide Wargamers" club. Like S&T, it includes a complete game in every issue. Contact THE WARGAMER c/o World Wide Wargamers, Eton Lodge, Highwood, Essex, England CM1 3HQ.

FIRE & MOVEMENT (Baron Publishing). Bi-monthly; $2 per issue, $9 per year. A well-done magazine which formerly carried some fantasy/SF material, but which will definitely be leaving this to the same publisher's *Gryphon* (q.v.) if and when that new magazine gets off the ground.

THE JOURNAL OF WW II WARGAMING (Nick Schuessler). 6 issues/year; subscriptions are available for as long as you like at $1/issue. A pamphlet-sized mimeographed publication dedicated exclusively to World War II gaming . . . of appeal mostly to historical buffs and complexity freaks. Contact JWWIIW at 1002 Warrington Drive, Austin, TX 78753.

THE GRENADIER (Game Designers' Workshop). Quarterly; $1.50 per issue, $5/year. Very similar in format to GDW's *The Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society* (q.v.), but devoted exclusively to historical gaming.

DARK NEBULA $5.95
A game of interstellar warfare. Manipulates starships and troops in an effort to control worlds while denying them to the enemy. Includes 8 astromorphic maps and 120 counters.



DEMON/ORC DICE $1.50/pair
by Gamescience
5/8ths inch white dice with large, easily read red numerals. In place of the number 1 is the head of a ferocious, helmeted Orc, which looks like an evil demon when turned upside down.

THE AWFUL GREEN THINGS FROM OUTER SPACE
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Quick, amusing game for 2 players takes us to the ends of the galaxy as the crew of the 'Zntar' fight to regain their ship from the align nasties.

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Cruisers $ 2.50 each
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Cruisers $ 2.25 each
Dreadnoughts $ 2.75 each

BUSHIDO
BUSHIDO $10.00
Fantasy role-playing in legendary Japan. The heroic adventures of Samurai, Ninjas, Wizards & Monsters with liberal doses of magic and martial arts. 2 books in packet.

ASK FOR OUR LIST OF COMPUTER GAMES FOR THE TSR 80, PET AND APPLE II

INFINITY $6.95
A comprehensive combat system for all role-playing games—for all periods; stone age to space age, including fantasy

FANTASY ADVENTURE CHARACTER SHEETS $3.50
24 character data sheets—concise, uncluttered data spaces. 3 ring binder holes for storage, plus space for character portraits with 6 sample portrait cards.

INTRUDER $3.95
Aboard deep-space station Prometheus, something is loose—and it's hunting you! Ziplocked game for any number of players.

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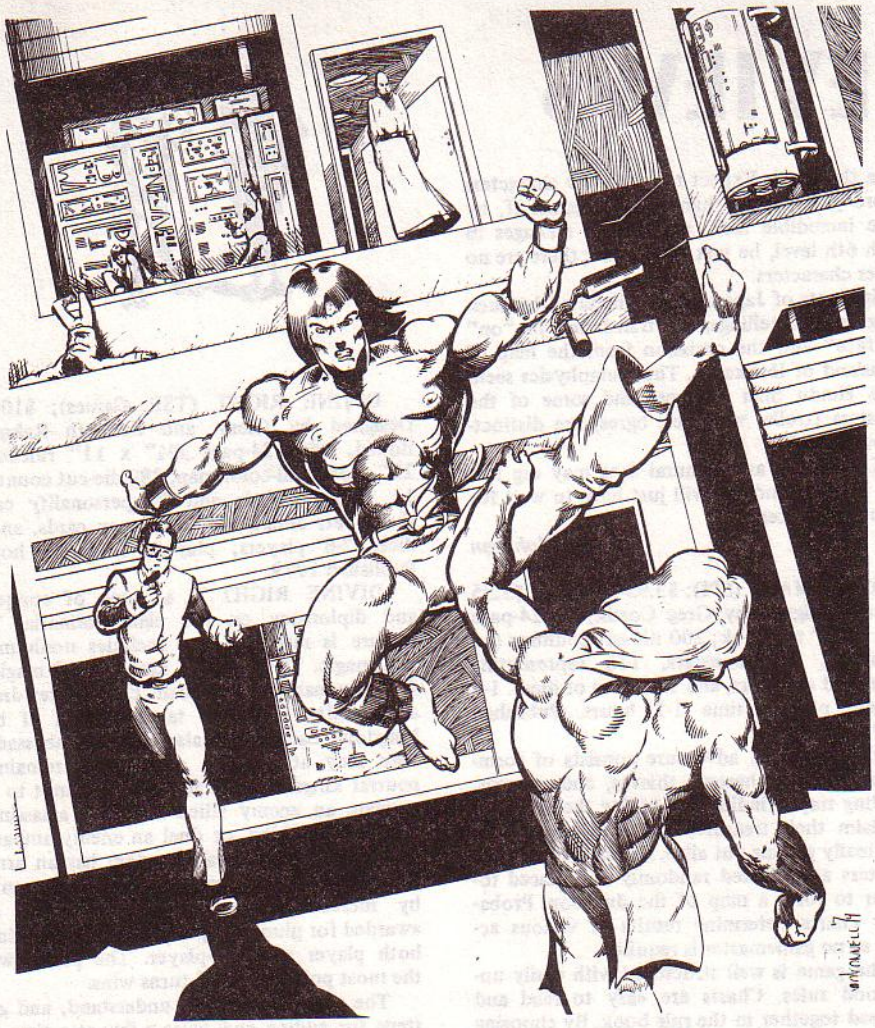

Contest Report

Our first contest (TSG 27) was a challenge. Readers were invited to write a game, game scenario, or piece of short fiction to explain the above picture.

Several of the entries were very interesting, but the clear winner was B. Dennis Sustare, designer of *Bunnies & Burrows* (Fantasy Games Unlimited) and *Intruder* (Task Force Games). Dennis met the challenge head-on. He designed a game that explained every single detail of that picture. You can even look at his game map and tell WHERE the pictured action is taking place. And it's FUN. We'll publish it in full next issue. You'll want to photocopy the map and counters (we hope), rather than destroying your TSG.

The runner-up presented no game – just a story. Here it is.

During the Postprandial Interim, the Conundrum devoted much of its resources to genetic experimentation. The goal: to breed a strain of quasi-human mach-mutin warriors. In theory, the macho-mutins could penetrate a high security installation without suspicion, being unarmed. Then, they would quickly eliminate the personnel, who would have only conventional quickills, eviscerators and firearms to defend themselves.

In 1061 P. S., the warriors had their first test. The Conundrum unleashed two of the macho-mutins against its own BWW Imbibing Facility at Dipso. In 10 frantic minutes, the macho-mutins incapacitated almost everyone in the facility, including 38 regulars, 2 janitors and a 7-year-old child. Then, when victory seemed accomplished, one of the womanless creatures goosed the other with a nunchuk. With a furious I-don-no, the aggrieved warrior shattered its over-friendly comrade's second vertebra, and dislocated its own hip. The crippled monster then suffered a 9mm soft-point projectile wound to the cranium.

That was the end of the macho-mutins. The project was reclassified an Agricultural Resource Site. An embalmed specimen may be viewed at the Pellagra Institute of Teratology.

–Chu Chok Chia

CONTEST

BE IT KNOWN:

The Conundrum State Shipyards are pleased to announce an open competition for the design of a new class of deep exploration ship. The Shipyards are prepared to consider a wide range of designs, but *minimum* characteristics are:

Crew: 4
Maneuver: 3
Power Plant: 3
Jump: 3
Range: 1 Jump
Ship's Boat: 1 Air Raft
Cargo Hold: 10 tons (& Air Raft)
Special Features: Streamlining

Any technological level may be specified, up to 15.

One-time construction cost should not exceed 100 million credits, including hull, engines, weapons, computer programs, and all special features, but excluding fuel, supplies, expendables and the inventory of the ship's locker.

All entries should include proposed class name, Universal Ship Profile, rough deck plan and itemized construction budget. All entries should confrom to *Traveller* Book 5 (*High Guard*).

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All entries become the property of TSG. The winning entry will be published in TSG; the winner will receive a 12-issue subscription. Second prize: 6 issues. We reserve the right to award no prizes if no entries of publishable quality are received. Entries must be postmarked no later than July 10, 1980.

KUNG FU 2100. **A game by B. Dennis Sustare...edited by Steve Jackson and the TSG staff...in the next issue of TSG.**

Can the Clonemaster's defenses and bodyguards save him from the dreaded Terminators? Or will he and his computers die beneath steel fists? Stay tuned!

CAPSULE REVIEWS

THE SPACE GAMER reviews board games, role-playing games, computer games, video games, and game supplements. We review play-by-mail games if a reviewer is enrolled. We will review any science fiction or fantasy game if the publisher supplies a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical wargames. TSG may publish a review of a game we are not sent – IF a reader submits a review.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine. For information on writing reviews for TSG, see the "Writers' and Artists' Guide" in this issue.

* * *

Due to some difficulty with the U.S. Postal Service, the review of *High Fantasy* planned for this issue will be printed in issue 30. Other games for which reviews have been received or assigned include: *Adventures in Fantasy, Broken-Tree Inn, City State of the World Emperor, Dark Nebula, Final Frontier, Escape from Astigar's Lair, Fortress Ellendar, The Hellpits of Nightfang Hero, Marine: 2002, Modron, Moorguard, Mythology, Rommel's Panzers, The Temple to Athena* and *Wreck of the B.S.M. Pandora.*

Games for which we are still seeking reviewers include: *Advanced Melee, Advanced Wizard, Artifact, The Beast Lord, Double Star, In the Labyrinth, MAATAC, Overkill (2nd ed.), Starfleet Wars, Tollenkar's Lair* and *Ultimatum.*

* * *

BUSHIDO (Phoenix Games); $10.00. Designed by Paul Hume and Bob Charrette. Bag, two 5½" x 8½" booklets. 136 pages total. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980. (Not included, but necessary for play: 6-sided, 12-sided, and 20-sided dice.)

If you liked the movie *Yojimbo* or the book *Shogun*, you will probably like this game.

But don't expect to tag your D&D characters with Japanese names and send them off to adventures in mythic Nippon. There are six basic attributes, but they don't correspond to D&D attributes and you don't roll for them. You divide 60 points between the attributes and design your characters according to a series of algorithms. Fun for those who like the system; tedious for those who don't.

BUSHIDO is medieval Japan, not as it was, but as it should have been. Your character is born a samurai, ronin, peasant, or ninja (one of the things you do roll for). He chooses a profession such as warrior, budoka, or gakusho, equips himself with katana, wakizashi, and so on, and wanders around trashing oni, kappa, tengu, and the rest of the menagerie. Between adventures, he can improve his skills at an academy or wait at the court of a friendly daimyo.

To reach 2nd level, a novice warrior must kill 10 first-level men or the equivalent. To reach 6th level, (he should live so long) he must kill a thousand. Expect to lose a few characters before you get the hang of this game. If, by some incredible luck, a character manages to reach 6th level, he just stays there; there are no higher characters.

Students of Japan may be irritated by such things as misspellings, the translation of "on" as "face" and the omission from the map of the island of Hokkaido. The metaphysics seem more Hindu than Japanese and some of the monsters (trolls, vampires, ogres) are distinctly round-eyed.

Karate fans and samurai fans may dig this one. Serious students will just have to wait for something better.

Forrest Johnson

DEATHMAZE (SPI); $3.95 softpack, $5.95 boxed. Designed by Greg Costikyan. 24-page 5½" x 8½" rulebook; 200 die-cut counters (14 characters, 58 monsters, 116 representing rooms and corridors, and 12 in lieu of dice). 1-6 players; playing time 1-2 hours. Published 1979.

DEATHMAZE adventure consists of forming a party of heroes, thieves, and wizards, avoiding traps, finding and killing the monsters to claim their treasures and gain experience, and finally getting out alive. Room and corridor counters are selected randomly and placed together to form a map of the dungeon. Probability charts determine results of various actions so no gamemaster is required.

The game is well structured with easily understood rules. Charts are easy to read and grouped together in the rule book. By choosing vocations and personal attributes for their characters, type of weapons, when to negotiate rather than fight, where to go, and when to use magic, the players get a reasonable feel of responsibility for their characters. There is good variety with 19 different monsters, 6 types each of magic spices, potions, rings and medallions, magic weapons and armor, plus rooms with statues, fountains, and trap doors. The combat system is simple and relatively quick. I have found play-balance challenging. Death is a real possibility and if you make it out, you may be badly wounded.

Two problems mar this game. Game charts are duplicated near the center of the rulebook, apparently with the intention that one set can be pulled out. Unfortunately, the page order makes that impossible so pages must be cut apart for the duplicate charts to be of use. Rooms and corridors are represented by regular counters. This was necessary to keep the game in a softpack and hold down the price, but I find it awkward to keep counters together and move another counter representing the party around on top of them.

DEATHMAZE is a good game for two specific purposes. Beginning fantasy gamers will appreciate the simple structure. After a few games, they can begin to add their own monsters or treasures and later advance to dungeon design and increased role-playing, while retaining the combat system and basic game concepts. Gamers with some experience will not find anything new in this game. However, it may provide a challenge when your usual playing partners are unavailable, since it is ideally designed for solitaire play.

Bruce Campbell

DIVINE RIGHT (TSR Games); $10.00. Designed by Glenn and Kenneth Rahman. Boxed, with 24-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 22" x 34" full-color map, 280 die-cut counters, 14 identity cards and 20 personality cards (both sets uncut), 45 diplomacy cards, and 2 dice. 2-6 players; playing time 3-9 hours. Published 1979.

DIVINE RIGHT is a game of conquest and diplomacy on the planet Minaria. The culture is medieval, and includes nonhumans and magic. There are 13 kingdoms; 2 magical, 4 non-human and 7 human. Each player draws an identity card and takes control of that kingdom. Each player also gets an ambassador, who may attempt to activate the remaining neutral kingdoms. He may also attempt to deactivate an enemy allied kingdom, assassinate a non-player king, or duel an enemy ambassador. Each non-magical kingdom has an army; some have navies. These may be supplemented by mercenaries and barbarians. Points are awarded for plundering castles and killing kings, both player and non-player. The player with the most points after 20 turns wins.

The rules are easy to understand, and give steps for adding new rules a few at a time for the advanced game. The map is well done, with each country a different color. Terrain is superimposed in black, giving an original look. The ambassadors give what could have been a dull game an exciting twist, and the magic units add even more variety. With 13 kingdoms to choose from, each game means a new strategy.

The rules are vague in some places, but with common sense you can fill in the blank spots. The diplomacy cards are made out of very thin cardstock, are small and hard to handle, and wear out quickly. The identity and personality cards are larger and thicker, but are still less than satisfactory.

Overall, this is an excellent game; no two play sessions are alike. The challenge of playing a different kingdom keeps players thinking, and the variety of special units can alter events quickly. It will be a long time before players grow bored with DIVINE RIGHT; I give it my highest recommendation.

–Doug Traversa

HOT SPOT (Metagaming); $2.95. Designed by W. G. Armintrout. 24-page 4" x 7" rulebook, 82 partially-cut counters, 12" x 14" map, plastic baggie. For two players; 1 to 1½ hours. Published 1979.

HOT SPOT is about an "oddball" battle sometime in the far future. A fleet of refugees from an interstellar war must take the planet Chiros in order to refuel. But Chiros is so hot the surface is molten. All human activity must be carried out from floating structures called "crustals." The crustals are mobile, and too fragile for any combat except with "light vehi-

cles and small arms" – the future equivalent of tanks and infantry.

This game works. It is fast and well-balanced. There is a good deal of excitement and possible frustation, especially when the Technocrat (attacking) player controls the surface of a crustal but cannot wrest movement control away from the defender. And the Technocrat is playing against time – his jury-rigged attack platforms will melt in four turns. The rules are well-written and clear, though there are a couple of bad typos (see TSG 27 for a designer's article and errata).

In the whole game, I see only one rules glitch. The rules give the Technocrat control of his platforms' movement at all times. I doubt he'd really have control, though, when the only units on board were enemy! A minor matter. My *big* objection to this game is component quality. The smaller counters are just barely legible. The hex-patterned crustal counters are very hard to cut out neatly – if they'd been designed as ovals, instead of geometric shapes, they would have looked better and played better. And the map, which is sort of lime-green, does not exactly evoke the image of a molten world. Just details – but if they're fixed in the next edition, play value will be greater.

On the whole, it's a good game – easily the best Microgame to appear recently. If you like SF tactical games, buy it.

Steve Jackson

KING ARTHUR (SPI); $5.00. Designed by Robert Mosca. Zip-lock bag with 22" x 17" map, 170 die-cut counters, 8-page 8½" x 11" Standard Rules booklet, and 4-page 8½" x 11" Exclusive Rules folder. For 2 players; about four hours long. Published 1979.

King Arthur and other nobles lead the Knights of the Round Table, other mounted knights, and archers against a coalition of rebel knights, Saxon men-at-arms, Scottish archers, Irish slingers, and Picts with poisoned arrows. The map shows Stonehenge and the surrounding area. Hexes represent 50 feet; turns cover 10 minutes, and units represent 200-500 man groups or leaders.

KING ARTHUR is one of four parts of the *Great Medieval Battles* quadrigame. (The others are historical games: *The Black Prince*, about the Battle of Navarette; *Tamburlaine the Great*, in which Mongol and Ottoman cavalry clash; and *Robert at Bannockburn*, which pits Scots pikemen against English knights and militia.) This system uses two sizes of units; one-hex units for small bodies of troops and double-size units with facing for larger, less maneuverable formations. This is a clever and realistic way to differentiate units. The combat system is also innovative. For each attack, a "to hit" roll is made, and then a morale roll is made to see if the defender routs.

Unfortunately, the game system doesn't really fit the subject. The Arthurian legends deal with chivalry and the heroism of individuals, not the confusion of real medieval warfare. The designer tries to deal with this by tacking on a long Exclusive Rules section dealing with man-to-man combat. This is a long, multi-round procedure; players select attack and defense options, compare Prowess Ratings, apply modifiers for Chivalry and other factors, and roll 2 die. The attack and defense options are based on random guessing; the penalties for high Chivalry ratings are silly. These man-to-man rules make KING ARTHUR the longest and most complex of the Medieval quads. Worse, the leader-combat rules and the victory conditions make regular units almost meaning-

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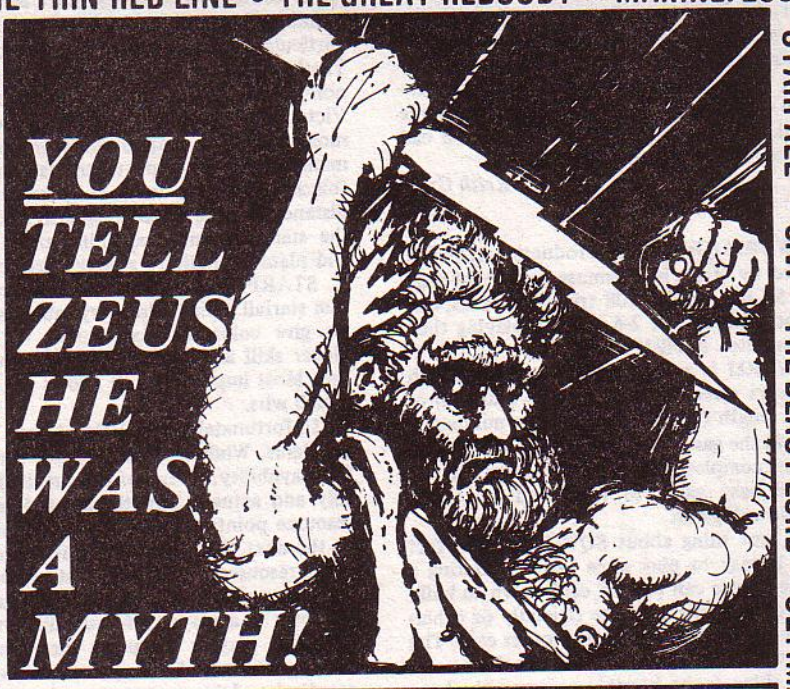

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less. The game is largely decided by the inevitable Arthur-vs.-Modred duel. Another problem is that the time-distance scale isn't right; the high movement factors make maneuvering unimportant.

The game can be fairly playable if the man-to-man combat matrix is replaced with a simple die roll. Overall, KING ARTHUR is not a bad game, but it's not a great one either.

–Keith Gross

SQWURM (Game Time Productions); $4.95. Designed by Merle M. Rasmussen. Two 24-page 2½" x 5" rule books, 108 triangular cards, and a cardboard box. For 2-6 players; playing time 10-30 minutes. Published 1979.

SQWURM is a fantasy card game in which the players attempt to conjure up a dragon of variable length (depending upon the number of players in the game) and prevent the other players from completing their dragon first. It is a fast and easy game to play, and is a good "wind-down" game.

The best thing about SQWURM is the fact that it is easy to play once learned. During a turn the player can place a card down to build onto a dragon of his choice (friendly or otherwise) or can discard and draw another card. The card artwork is really very good, but the . . .

Bad thing is the horrible cover on the box. It just will not help the game make any sales. The art is too cartoon-like for most gamers, but this isn't the only thing wrong with SQWURM. The rules are poorly written and must be deciphered. But once learned (and it only takes a few games to do so), SQWURM is a lot of fun. We played it for three hours straight when first learning.

SQWURM is a game that you will either love or hate. It is simple enough that an 8-year-old can play it, but the strategies that are possible in the game rival those of a boardgame. For $4.95, it wouldn't hurt to try it. The game is available at hobby stores or through Game Time Productions, Ltd.; Route 1, Box 135; Minden, IA 51553.

Jerry Epperson

STARFALL (Yaquinto), $13.00. Designed by J. Stephen Peek; development and rules by Michel J. Matheny. Boxed, with one 27-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, a 21½" x 28" folded game board, two 6-sided dice, 560 die-cut counters, a pad of 8½" x 11" player data sheets, a plastic sorting tray for the counters, four 17"x11" larger data sheets, and four cardboard screens. Two to four players; solitaire works, too. Playing time is 2 to 8 hours or more, depending on the scenario being used. Published 1979.

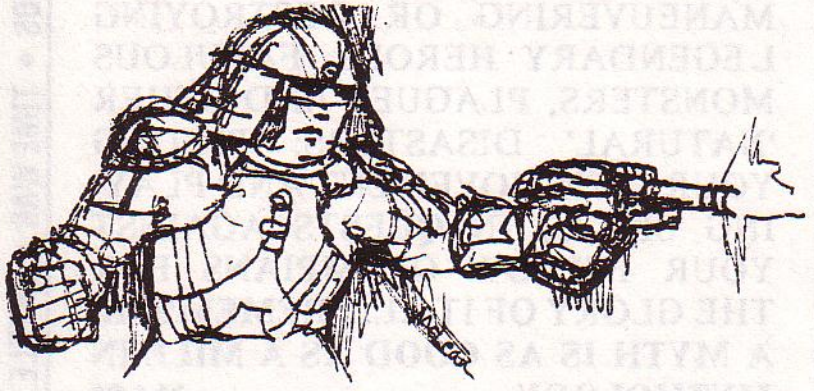
In STARFALL, 2-4 futuristic empires with 24-th century technology start off with their home solar systems and whatever else the particular scenario being played gives them. They go on to find, conquer, and colonize non-player systems and to fight each other. Victory conditions vary, but generally, the most powerful empire wins. Normal movement is slow except when "starfall points" (black holes) are used as gateways so great distances can be crossed instantly. Skill in using the starfall points, expanding one's economy, and planning military strategy decide the game.

STARFALL is basically a fun game to play. The starfall points, discovery tables, and scenarios give color and excitement to the game. Player skill and random chance are well balanced. Most importantly, it allows the players to match wits.

Unfortunately, STARFALL has some *bad* problems. While it must sacrifice some realism for playability, several of its unrealistic rules are silly and actually hurt the game. For example, resource points cannot be saved from one turn to the next. This eliminates the tactic of stockpiling resources to produce nasty surprises later. The rules also suffer from some basic contradictions: if a player can only find the systems of other players by using the standard procedure, why are all the systems known to players displayed on a map everyone can see? The rules are maddeningly over-explained and repetitious. Finally, the resemblance between STARFALL and STELLAR CONQUEST is too close for comfort. This was probably unavoidable, though, since both games are of the same specialized category.

STARFALL is worth its price in cash and learning time. But there are other games more worthwhile.

Jeff Jacobson



TOP SECRET (TSR Hobbies); $10. Designed by Merle M. Rasmussen. 62-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, an introductory module (Sprechenhaltestelle – 25½" x 11" cardboard cover with three maps, 28-page administrator's file, and 4-page agent's file), pair of plastic percentile dice, and a cardboard game box. For 3 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

TOP SECRET is a contemporary espionage role-playing game in which the players assume roles of secret agents (a la James Bond) carrying out missions assigned to them by the administrator (the game master) of their respective departments (whew!). It plays the way a good spy novel reads – fast and deadly. It has the added appeal of being set in the present. Matt Helm, move over!

The finest thing about TOP SECRET is that it provides loads of information (above and beyond the typo-free, complete rules) on spy agencies, and a weapons glossary. Character creation is unusual (rolling percentile dice instead of three six-sided dice) and some of the rules look like a Xerox of *Boot Hill*. In fact, projectile combat is resolved much as in *Boot Hill*.

Problems plague TOP SECRET. The most frustrating one is the awkwardness of the hand-to-hand combat rules (which are going to be revised in the second edition). They are time-consuming and just a bit too complete. Also, there is the distraction of terrible artwork. But the Jeff Dee drawings are excellent and so are those of Erol Otus. The game works only for a small number of players (no more than 4).

I liked the game, despite its faults. The system is new enough that the situations will not become blase (as with other role-playing games) for months or years. And it would be a sound investment for any fans of the James Bond, Executioner, or Avenger stories. Others would be wise to stick with fantasy, if they cannot associate with the heroes of the present.

Jerry Epperson

VECTOR 3 (Simulations Publications); $3.95. Designed by Greg Costikyan, Zip-lock bag containing decorative folder which unfolds into 17" x 11" ship configuration display. Inside is a 4-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, a 17" x 11" paper gameboard, a sheet with 8 charts, and 100 counters. Two players; playing time 1 to 2 hours. Published 1979.

VECTOR 3 is a tactical space combat between two civilizations in "the densely populated Gilgamesh Cluster." Ships are "standard," "modular," "Mass-produced throughout the Cluster" by expending "ship points" to buy pods for crew, weapons, defenses, of varying power, depending on expenditure of "technology points." Play is in 3 dimensions, with an XY and XZ board with movement on both to represent each single ship. The game is very free-form: the playing boared are simple grids of unspecified sizes, turns are unspecified lengths, there are no scenarios except suggested balances of ship and technology points. Each turn has a move phase, phases for each weapon, then calculation. Ships move by Newtonian physics; you must calculate upcoming changes of momentum for the next turn according to engine thrust used.

The three-dimensional, Newtonian movement provide a challenge wherein otherwise simple dogfights become intricately planned maneuvers. There is a broad variety of weaponry having various effects on defenders. firepower, movement, and survival.

The fun of simulating realistic space combat becomes overshadowed, however, by the tedium of the calculations. It takes as long to set up the ship as to play the game. There is more counting and figuring than moving and firing, and the game moves slowly for the amount of records kept. Players are expected to photocopy the playing boards and write in the ship positions each game-turn. It becomes impossible to keep track of all the ships and torpedoes, and the numbers on the edge of the grids run in opposite ways on each board, so you're constantly adding when you meant to subtract.

In short, the game is too busy. Once you've played a game of VECTOR 3 you find yourself in no hurry to play again.

Ronald Pehr

VILLIANS AND VIGILANTES (Fantasy Games Unlimited); $6.00. Designed by Jeff Dee and Jack Herman. It consists of one 38-page

8½" x 11" rulebook, 8½" x 11" errata sheet, 8¼" x 10¾" character reference sheet, and an 8¼" x 10¾" combat modifications sheet. Generally for 2 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1979.

V&V is a minor attempt to open the vast depths of the comic world to role-playing. Much like many R.P. games, V&V is played on a homemade board designed by the gamemaster. "In the dimension where V&V is real, the planet Earth has undergone a radical shift in reality which allows super-powered characters to exist." V&V depicts the day-to-day lives of everything from a mutant to a supernatural to an extraterrestial character.

There is a very intriguing 2½ page list of spells, mutations, and weapons which can be used by a character. Following this is a 7½ page selection explaining each of these. This game covers almost everything, including headquarters, secret identities, costumes, and inventions.

One of the most cumbersome points of this game is the number of specifications to be determined to fire and hit each target with a single weapon.

VILLIANS AND VIGILANTES is a good, firm, introductory role-playing game with easy-to-learn rules. If you are a game master from another "world" you can, with little difficulty, adapt these rules to fit almost any other role-playing game.

Marc Weidenbaum

SUPPLEMENTS

ALL THE WORLD'S MONSTERS, VOLUME III (Chaosium); $10. Edited by Steve Perrin and Jeff Pimper. 114-page 8½" x 11" booklet. A resource book for fantasy role-playing games, written in D&D terms with a page of instructions for translating to *Runequest*.

Another monster book. What can I say? Pages and pages of various beasties, maybe 300 in all, with brief descriptions and statistics.

This book will give a GM all kinds of ideas. Some of the beasties are interesting and original; others are drawn from sources that don't normally get into gaming. The Curl Up, for instance, is taken from an M.C. Escher drawing – and the description here tallies very well with the probable behavior of Escher's beastie.

Unfortunately, the book is difficult to use. The computer-printout format is hard on the eye; the illustrations are almost never on the page with the creature they are supposed to represent; the grammar of some of the entries is so bad that it is hard to tell exactly what is meant. The biggest problem, though, is that so many of the monsters are trivial variations on everyday creatures, or meaningless combinations of attributes. For every creative and interesting creature here, there are two or three Neanderthals with funny names or "giant dog with cat feet and weasel face" monsters. A format which invites everyone to send in their favorite monster will inevitably draw some Monty Haul entries. They should have been screened out.

Not the best-done monster book in the world, then . . . and a bit high-priced. If you liked previous volumes of *All the World's Monsters*, you'll love this; it's more of the same. Otherwise, recommended mainly for diehard D&D people, or *Runequest* fans who want to populate their world with some rather silly creatures.

Steve Jackson

The Fantasy Trip

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* ADVANCED MELEE expands MELEE's basic combat system. New material includes aiming, aerial combat, water combat, critical hits mounts and some new options. If you want more reality and rules for new situations, this is for you. *$4.95 02-1-003*

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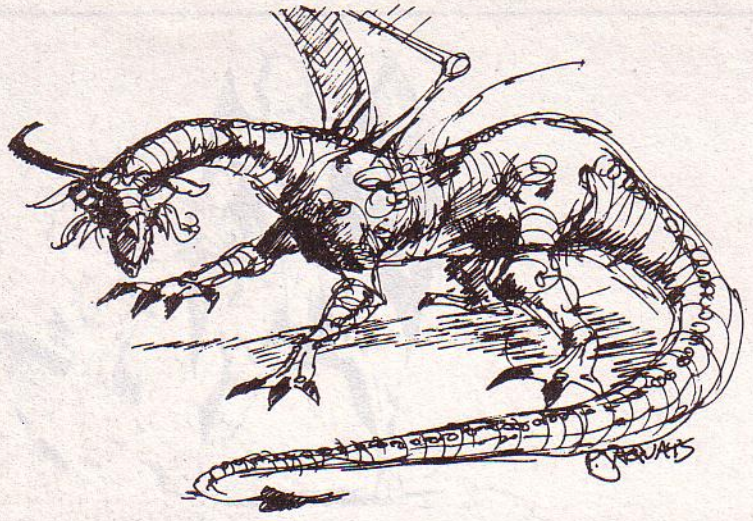


THE BOOK OF TREASURE MAPS (Judges Guild); $3.95. Designed by Paul Jaquays. 50 page 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players; playing time 2-8 hour per campaign. Published 1979.

The booklet contains five treasure maps plus accompanying scenarios and dungeon settings. These are set in the world on maps published by JG; however, they can be transferred intact into the GM's own world if he so desires. THE LOST TEMPLE is two levels of medium difficulty; THE TOMB OF AETHERING THE DAMNED, one level; THE LONE TOWER, a multi-level of slightly more difficulty; WILLCHIDAR'S WELL, three small levels of medium difficulty; and THE CRYPTS OF ARCADIA, a large one-level maze about equal to THE LONE TOWER.

Each scenario comes with plenty of background information, accompanying rumors, maps for characters and the DM, and a wide variety of nasties. Well-written, it is easy to read and figure out. The maps appear in imaginitive places – such as written in moon runes on a +1 shield – and are very clear. All five are easily placed anywhere the DM desires; he is not limited by the JG's own worlds. They are good for one campaign apiece, but if one wishes, thay may be continued.

There is little to criticize about this book. THE BOOK OF TREASURE MAPS assumes a working knowledge of the D&D system, but that is about all.

THE BOOK OF TREASURE MAPS I recommend to almost any player who wished a good example of a one-night campaign set-up, whether he had his own campaign world or not; whether he had been playing two weeks or two years.

Elisabeth Barrington

THE CAVERNS OF THRACIA (Judges' Guild); $6.50. Designed by Paul Jaquays. Game aid for *Dungeons & Dragons*. 79-page 8½" x 11" booklet. 2 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1979.

This supplement represents a series of rooms and caverns which have had many previous owners. Long ago they were a religious center for lizard men, but were later taken over by humans worshipping Thanatos, the god of death. The humans used beast men (gnolls, minotaurs, dog brothers, etc.) for slaves. The slaves rebelled and the caverns changed hands again. The beast men chose an intelligent minotaur to rule them; his descendants still reign. The caverns are now in the hands of the minotaur king, except for a small part of the first level, still controlled by the worshippers of Thanatos. This dungeon is for characters of levels 2 through 6.

A strong point of the game is its flexibility and variety. There are monsters that any low-level character could successfully tackle, but others will make even the bravest run. The fact that there are two opposing sides in the caverns opens up the possibility of the players allying themselves with one of the sides.

The major problem of this game is that there are too many monsters. It seems you can't go ten feet without being jumped by gnolls, minotaurs, or other nasties. Another problem is that monsters which could be surprises aren't. Skeletons, dead bodies, statues, etc., are animated nearly every time.

Overall, the good points greatly outweigh the bad. My players' reactions have been very positive toward this dungeon. If you want an exciting dungeon for D&D, then THE CAVERNS OF THRACIA is for you.

–Steve Cook

DUCK TOWER (Judges Guild); $5.98. Designed by Paul Jaquays and Rudy Kraft. *Runequest* supplement. One 62-page, 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players. Playing time: one hour up. Published 1980.

"Long-lost ruined city and deserted citadel. Tales of fabulous riches and terrible monsters. Rumors of horrible dooms and powerful magic."

This is *not* your typical dungeon, full of notes like, "Room 513. Three orcs, 50 g.p." DUCK TOWER delivers everything it promises. The hundred rooms of DUCK TOWER include 61 personalized "monsters," no less intelligent or resourceful than player-characters. A party with the old kill-the-monsters-grab-the-treasure attitude just won't survive this one.

On the other hand, this is a sophisticated dungeon and it requires a sophisticated DM. The DM has to take charge; the monsters will not just wait patiently in their rooms until someone comes and kills them.

DUCK TOWER is a wonder and a marvel, a priceless adventure for anyone who likes *Runequest*.

Forrest Johnson

THE HIDDEN SHRINE OF TAMOACHAN (TSR); $5.00. Designed by Harold Johnson and Jeff R. Leason. (*supplement to AD&D*) Contains one 24½" x 11" shield with map on one side, one 8½" x 11" 32-page rulebook, and one 8½" x 11" 8-page illustrated booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

This is the latest AD&D module from TSR, and the first of a new "competition series." It was used at Origins '79 in the AD&D tournament and includes a scoring system. The shrine is an ancient Mayan/Aztec pyramid, and the module uses names, monsters, and characters based on that period. It also includes an illustrated booklet with fifteen pictures depicting various parts of the shrine to be shown to the players at the appropriate time. Also included are three pre-made characters for use if the scoring system is used.

This module is well though out and is very detailed. The illustrations are accurate and add an extra dimension to the adventure. Reference sheets contain a combat matrix for the three characters included, and a monster index with the statistics of all the creatures in the shrine.

The shrine has two entrances, but the rules are written based on the assumption that you enter through the tournament entrance. If you choose to use the other, more obvious, entrance, the DM must read the rules from back to front, which can get confusing. Although the map and rules are detailed, they are also confusing. And parts of the scoring system seem less than logical.

Of all the modules TSR has published (and I have read them all) I would rate this right in the middle. For those DMs who have trouble designing their own dungeons, I say buy it. For those who don't, save your $5 and make your own shrine.

Doug Traversa

SHADOWS/ANNIC NOVA (GDW); $4.98. Supplement to the *Traveller* game system. Designed by Marc Miller. 8½" x 6" 44-page booklet. For two or more players; playing time 2-8 hours. Published 1980.

This double adventure provides two separate scenarios using the *Traveller* SF role-playing system (the *Traveller* basic set is required). Each adventure begins with a list of pre-generated characters, equipment and introductory material. The bulk of the information for each adventure is for referee use only; using the book as a guideline, the referee will impart this information to the players as the game progresses. ANNIC NOVA deals with a mysterious alien spacecraft that is found abandoned in a minor stellar system. The information supplied deals mostly with a detailed, room by room description of the starship, complete with deckplans, explaining the functions of each area and possible dangers or events that will take place therein. SHADOWS concerns a complex of unknown origins that appear after a seismic tremor on the planet Yorbund. Information in this adventure includes a chamber-by-chamber description of the interior of the pyramidal structures, notes of interior conditions, and a list of animals that may be encountered.

The best feature of this rulebook is the attention paid to detail. Both deal with alien structures, now deserted by their creators. The designer has gone to considerable pains to capture an alien feel throughout the adventures. Both adventures provide comprehensive backgrounds for interesting adventures.

This double adventure is not programmed so that it plays itself; the book gives a good setting for adventure, but the referee will have to do some work himself to flesh the game out.

Overall, SHADOWS/ANNIC NOVA is an interesting supplement for *Traveller*. The situations it describes should provide the players with a number of intriguing adventures, and even if the settings described aren't used exact-

ly as given, they should provide an enterprising referee with enough ideas to set up a similar game scenario on his own. While SHADOWS/ ANNIC NOVA can easily be omitted from a player's *Traveller* collection, the dedicated referee will not want to be without it.

Tony Watson

THE TREASURE VAULTS OF LINDORAN (Judges Guild); $4.00. Designed by Geoffrey O. Dale. 32-page 8½" x 11" booklet. For 2-6 players; playing time 2-4 hours. Published 1980.

The Elf-King of Lindoran, going off to a hopeless war, sealed all his treasures in a vault. On this vault he placed spells of repulsion so no one who lacked the counterspell could enter. But this was a thousand years ago, and now the spells have weakened. Perhaps entry is possible – if one can get past the red dragon outside!

THE TREASURE VAULTS OF LINDORAN has an interesting new feature: "special skeleton and zombie guards" which are cleric-immune, along with lots of magic mouths. Each room is nicely detailed, and written so that anyone could convert it into his own system. If the characters use their brains, they can find their way to more treasure than they could carry.

It is advisable to play higher-level characters in this campaign, as some of the nasties are more so than usual. There are some really bad typos; however, this is just a detail. All the walls prevent Teleportation- and ESP-related spells; this drastically reduces a magic user's barrage of spells.

If you like really tough AD&D challenges, this is for you; if not, wait a while.

Elisabeth Barrington

MINIATURES

OGRE/G.E.V. fans rejoice! Two companies are now producing an ever-growing range of 1/300 scale miniatures designed to add a visual perspective to these games. Martian Metals has a small but growing line of vehicles, directly based on the illustrations in the OGRE/G.E.V. games rule books, as well as in *The Space Gamer*. Stan Johansen Miniatures has a complete range of vehicles in their "Space Armor" series, in a scale similar to those from Martian Metals but different in design. This allows a player or group to build two separate and distinct forces to represent opposing combatants.

Much of the Stan Johansen Miniatures line was reviewed last year (TSG no. 23. May/June 1979) including Combat Hovercraft, Light Tank, Fixed Howitzer, Large VERTOL Transport, and A.A. tank. Since then, the line has been expanded to include a VERTOL "Fighter Bomber," a "Super Tank" – a large twin-turreted tank which may be assembled in a variety of configurations, a 3-piece "Command Post with Landing Pad," a "Hovercraft Armored Personnel Carrier," and a "Heavy Combat Hovercraft" with a large heavy-weapon turret. These pieces are of slightly better quality than Ros-Heroics, and are sold, for the most part, in packs of five. While prices vary a bit from item to item, most are priced at $2.50 per pack. Stan Johansen also publishes a quick and simple rule set for use with these vehicles, "Gunship 2000,' which costs $1.50. These rules maintain the flavor of the OGRE/G.E.V. originals and allow for fast action with ease of playability.

The Martian Metals line is a bit smaller, consisting of OGRE, a massive roughcast model cast in the image of the illustrations. My sample needed a minute with a file prior to assembly. The G.E.V. is sharp and crisp, and requires a bit of assembly. The Heavy Tank is an impressive vehicle, nicely cast. The only other vehicle available is the Missile Tank, another sharply detailed casting. The G.E.V., Heavy Tank, and Missile Tank come in packs of three and sell for $3.95 a pack. The OGRE cost $6.95.

Nevin J. Templin

PLAY AIDS

ZARGONIANS (Bearhug Enterprises); $5.00 per set. Designed by Daryl A. Shirley, art by James Mirick. 72 1½" x ¾" full-color counters per set. Published 1980.

ZARGONIANS is an original and cheap alternative to lead miniatures. Printed on thick, die-cut cardboard, ZARGONIANS are rectangular counters that are held upright by separately-purchased, inexpensive, plastic stands. Each counter is printed with a fairly decent, full color picture of the person or creature it represents.

The neat things about these are that they are light, durable, and cheap. The name of the creature is printed beneath its picture and a little identification letter is in an upper corner. The monsters are printed 24 to a sheet with three sheets to a package. The sheets in each package are identical, and displayed in a clear, plastic wrapper, so you buy exactly what you see.

A major problem with ZARGONIANS is that Bearhug Enterprises needs a new printer. The printing is blurry and the colors are badly misregistered. Some of the names are almost unreadable. Also, when a counter is placed in its base, the creature name is hidden. Bearhug tells us the second printing will be better.

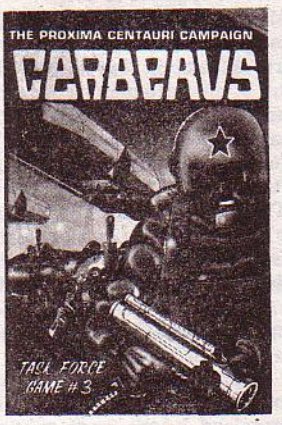
ZARGONIANS, besides all that, are a fine substitute for those heavy, bendable lead miniatures. There are *lots* of different critters available, including several really obscure ones. (But none of the really big ones.) My heart goes out to the artist for tackling such a gargantuan task.

Denis Loubet

COMPUTER GAMES

COMPUTER BISMARCK (Strategic Simulations). Available for the TRS-80 Level II in a 16K tape and 32K tape version. A disk version is expected by midsummer. Tape version at $49.95. Game with a rulebook, 2 cassette tapes, 2 laminated mapboard/turn record charts, ship

THEY'RE OUT OF THIS WORLD!



CERBERUS, the first planet of another star to be reached by man, was already occupied, and the creatures from Tau Ceti wanted no visitors. But man's destiny was in space, and he would not be denied!

CERBERUS is a strategic game of planetary invasion. The game includes over 100 die-cut playing pieces representing the units that fought on Cerberus. Look for it in your local store for $3.95.

The solar storms of 2036 brought an abrupt halt to travel between Earth and the great mining bases in the Asteroid Belt. This created the perfect conditions for the Russians on Asteroid Zero-Two to wipe out their competition: the Americans on ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR.

The game includes over 100 die cut playing pieces, as well as 165 die cut damage markers to record the savage attacks on Asteroid Zero Four.

TASK FORCE games are available wherever fine games are sold. If your dealer does not carry TASK FORCE games, ask him to check into our full line of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Historical games.

data cards and 2 grease pencils. (Also available now in a disk version, at $59.95, for the Apple II Plus.) One or two players; 1-3 hours. It should be noted here that according to J. Billings, a co-designer, the 16K version will no longer be produced. So when available stocks are exhausted, the 16K owner will be out of luck unless he upgrades to 32K.

COMPUTER BISMARCK is a simulation of the attempted breakout of the *Bismarck* into the North Atlantic in May of 1941. There are 6 scenarios – an introductory scenario for the beginner, the historical scenario for two players or solitaire play, and three "what if" scenarios. The game is won by accumulating more Victory Points than your opponent by the end of the game. There are 30 turns, but the game ends as soon as one player has 30 more victory points than his opponent and all German ships except the Prince Eugen have been sunk. Victory points are awarded for sinking each other's ships and for successful convoy attacks by the German capital ships and U-boats.

The graphics are excellent. The map produced on the screen is on a 20 x 18 square grid with Greenland in the north-west corner and Spain in the south-east corner. All the bookkeeping is done by the computer. Both players enter their moves separately and without each other's knowledge. The computer then carries out all the moves simultaneously, determining whether shadowing was possible and successful. Also determined and resolved by the computer are carrier air attacks, naval combat, convoy attacks and a weather update. Withdrawal from combat may be attempted if either or both players do not desire combat. Another nice feature is the ability to save a game in progress.

The only drawback in the play of the game is in naval combat. When combat occurs, the computer chooses which ships fire at which. You have no tactical control. A major drawback, in the 16K version only, is the possibility of running out of memory in the solitaire scenario during play, which will result in a crash of the program.

This is a superb game. It has so many strategic options for both sides that it is unlikely to be optimized. If you have a disk system, I would recommend the disk version. If you don't, or cannot wait, then the 32K tape version is still a good buy. Although it is the same game, serious consideration should be given to the drawbacks of the 16K version before deciding to buy it.

Joseph T. Suchar

PLAY BY MAIL

GALAXY II (not to be confused with Clemens' *Universe II*), monitored by Brett A. Tondreau (P.O. Box 7968, Van Nuys, CA 91409); including payment for three pads of turnsheets, set-up cost me about $30 (it would cost less if fewer turnsheets were bought), and my game costs $11.75 per turn. This is a computer-monitored game; you get 20 pages of rules and four supplements when you order the rules and map of your galaxy when your game actually starts. Turns take 4-6 weeks.

GALAXY II is a game of interstellar empires. Players adopt one of three basic attitudes which affect who their ships and planets will (and will not) attack. These attidudinal groups (Barbarian, Federation, Nomadic) also define group victory conditions. You start on one planet of one solar system at a known location in a galaxy of known shape and try to conquer everyone else.

GALAXY II allows you to name not only your race, but also all colonized planets, all ships (of various sizes), plus individuals (yourself, as "Player-Ruler", governors of each colony, captains of each ship, and three assistants per colony or per ship); I have developed an entire theory of my society expressed in how many names are formed. The economic system has three types of minerals which are used to produce a wide variety of items from which ships (and planetary defenses) are constructed; this level of detail is typical of the game as a whole.

GALAXY II is a bit weak on rationale. Specifically, no galaxy can contain more than 1,000 stars; mine contains considerably less, as I suspect most do, because it is given a shape within a map (a total of 100 stars in a diagonal band). No "galaxy" is quite so small. This is more a psychological problem than anything else; the game works well.

GALAXY II emphasizes internal factors (economics, details of life support, power and combat, etc.) but does allow for diplomacy. The victory conditions (conquest of the map) mean that players have no compelling reasons for long-term alliances, except possibly within an attitudinal group. If you can afford it, can tolerate rules in need (and in process) of rewriting, and want to maximize creativity in fashioning your race, I recommend GALAXY II.

Paul S. Person

STARWEB, monitored by Flying Buffalo, Inc.; set-up $10, turns $3 up. This is a computer-monitored game; 17-page 5½" x 8½" rulebook. First game started 1976.

STARWEB is a game of interstellar development and conflict. Each player adopts one of six roles and the role adopted determines how the player earns victory points. For example, Merchants earn VP's by transporting raw materials (RMs) while Empire Builders must own worlds to earn VP's. All players can also get VP's from the possession of artifacts; artifacts can be traded by players. All this virtually forces diplomatic interaction on the players.

STARWEB has a solid SF rationale for a universe limited to 225 stars. The mechanics are simple, perhaps too simple for some gamers. Instructions must be formatted properly, but are easily written.

Players may invent their race's name (or use an assigned "house name"), but ships, planets, etc. remain anonymous numbers. Economics consist of transporting RMs to worlds with industry and building ships. Each star has only one habitable planet, so all action is between systems, not within them.

STARWEB is a smoothly-run game (3-4 weeks for the slow version) which emphasizes diplomacy at the expense of detail. It is recommended for those who like galactic empire themes and who would like a game with lots of hidden intelligence.

Paul S. Person

WRITING REVIEWS FOR THE SPACE GAMER

Capsule Reviews

Most of the reviews we print will be "capsule" reviews – 400 words or less. We pay $5 for each capsule review accepted. We want to run a review for EVERY new sf or fantasy game or supplement. During 1980, we'll also accept reviews of older games.

Each capsule review should be five paragraphs long, and contain:

(1) Basic information. Present these facts, in this order: Name of the game; publisher; price; designer. (If applicable: "supplement to ———," "companion to ———," or similar note.) Format: list of components, with sizes of maps and rulebooks, number of counters, etc. Number of players; playing time; publication date.

(2) General description of the game: background, the sides, course of play, special features, etc.

(3) Strong points. Discuss what is good about the game; in every game; there IS something worthwhile. Don't try to be Pollyanna – just point out the game's successes.

(4) Weak points. Every game has its problems, too. If the only faults you can find are minor ones, say so. If the game is fatally flawed, come right out and SAY SO. If you can phrase your criticisms as suggestions for improvement, do so.

(5) Summation: your overall opinion of the game. Who should and should not buy it, and why.

All reviews must be signed; the reviewer's name WILL be printed. No game may be reviewed by its designer or by an employee of the publisher. (Designer's articles are welcome, but must be billed as such!) Final note: If you can write a complete review in less than the full 400 words, by all means do so.

This review format is designed to encourage fairness and to give the reader enough information to let him decide whether he wants to buy that game. Keep that in mind when you write. This is a short review, NOT a complete analysis. For those who want to write longer reviews, each issue will have one or two –

Featured Reviews

These will be game reviews 1,000 to 2,000 words long. They should contain *all the above information*, plus whatever else the reviewer wants to say. They may be written in any format. A featured review may cover either a new game or one that has been on the market for some time. If TSG has not already published a capsule review, write one, separately, and submit it at the same time. We may even use both.

. . . As for your article, I hope you won't mind a few clarifications; points that weren't wanted in the book, but which may prove important in fantasy gaming.

Overmen actually live three times as long as humans, with a life expectancy between two and three hundred years; they mature physically around age thirty, sexually around age forty, and in many ways they're never mature emotionally. You mention their pride; there's also their total lack of empathy. An overman can be compassionate, or sympathetic, or logically appreciate someone's point of view, but they are incapable of actually identifying with anyone – even another overman. A human psychiatrist would diagnose this as selective flattening of affect.

An overman may not insist on being leader or giving advice, but he sure as hell won't follow orders, either. He'll do as he thinks best, regardless of what he's told. This was a major reason they lost the Racial Wars.

Unlike humans, overmen are not inherently gregarious; they do not need each other's company. An overman is perfectly happy living alone his entire life.

The naturalists who say overmen could interbreed with humans are wrong. Quite aside from the physical impossibilities (no human woman would survive), it's genetically impossible, and wouldn't work even if an overwoman were artificially inseminated with human sperm. Overmen have forty-*eight* chromosomes.

The sexual cycle of a mature overwoman varies from sixty to seventy-five days, and is not tied to any annual cycle; an overman will be ready any time he can smell an overwoman in heat, and will be totally disinterested at all other times. Overmen marry solely to simplify inheritance; or at least that was the original idea. The companionship angle is also appreciated by some.

Overmen should have the same difficulty in acquiring followers of their own species as they do with others, it seems to me; not because they find each other hideous, but because they are loners and not inclined to take orders.

The reason overmen prefer fighting to wizardry (you were right about that) is that magic, being inherently chaotic in nature, with no underlying logic or order, upsets their sense of the proper order of things.

All in all, I like the article; you've certainly done a better job than I did running overmen in D&D. There's also the angle that it may sell a few copies of my book, and I can always use free publicity.

Oh, yes. The sexually-active part of an overwoman's cycle lasts about three days . . .

. . . The illustration is actually one of the better depictions I've seen of an overman in several ways, even if he does come out looking a bit like a chimp from "Planet of the Apes". Minor quibbles: The hair at the sides of the face really shouldn't be there, and the head-hair in general is probably a bit longer and fuller than it should be. Also, the hands don't appear to have opposable fifth fingers, as they ought.

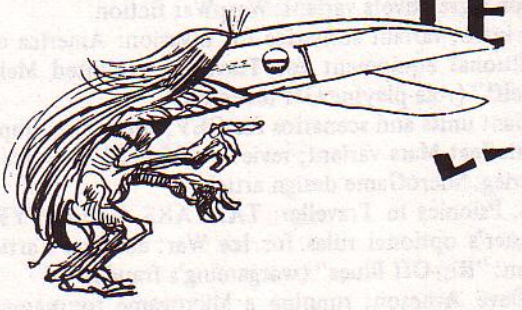
That's something I've had trouble describing, and therefore only mentioned very briefly, in passing, in *Basilisk*; where we humans can oppose our first fingers, and therefore have a special name for 'em and call them thumbs, overmen can oppose both the first and fifth fingers. Calling this two thumbs, though, is confusing; people think they've got six fingers, or that the index finger is opposable. Besides, the fifth finger is longer and thinner than the first, even if it *is* opposable; it's jointed out to the side like a thumb, but hasn't got the thick, fleshy pad that's at the base of one's thumb, which makes it look like one's thumb has two joints instead of three.

And for that matter, the other fingers on an overman's hand are jointed a bit differently in order to take advantage of this oddity. The thumb isn't as thickly fleshed; the other three fingers are longer, proportionately, and turn outward a bit from each other.

I don't think any of this would make much difference in playing them, though.

Lawrence Watt Evans
Lexington, KY

LETTERS



I wish you much success with *The Space Gamer*. Over the past years, I have been very impressed with it. I do, however, feel that your first issue is an improvement over the former format.

Concerning the review in *Ares*, I made an interesting observation: David Ritchie reviewed both *Rivets* and *OneWorld* and made all sorts of nasty remarks about "rocks break scissors" combat systems; he also rated them rather low.

Now, as it happens, I have found *Rivets* to be less than exciting for solitaire play. *OneWorld*, however, is a lot of fun solitaire (using die rolls to govern the aspects of the Children in combat).

It is fortunate for SPI that David Ritchie didn't review *Sorcerer*, which has the same "rocks break scissors" basis to its combat system as *Rivers* (the specific adaptation is, of course, completely different). As it happens, Eric Goldberg reviewed *Sorcerer*; apparently he isn't as adverse to "rocks break scissors" as David Ritchie.

Eric Goldberg reports that "*Sorcerer* fails both as a game and as fantasy". I found it hard to solitaire, but when I got involved in a multiplayer PBM game it turned into a very interesting tactical game (imagine *PanzerBlitz* where the tanks can jump across the board from some hexes to other hexes. . .). I also identified with my sorcerers, indicating *some* involvement in fantasy.

Over the past year or so, I have been reexamining the games I own (and purchasing far fewer games as a result). One of the results of this has been the discovery of many games which, while not particularly interesting or easy to play the first time around, improve as repeated efforts are made to master them (and to clarify the rules), eventually becoming very good games indeed.

Paul S. Person
APO NY

I just wanted to write and thank you for the fine job you did with my article, "Adding Muskets to Melee."

In regard to your editorial comment about the rate of fire being too optimistic, I would have to agree. My original research put the rate of fire at 1 in 10 or 12. The higher rate of fire was used later in an attempt to "balance" the musket against the other weapons in Melee, since in the original playtesting no one ever managed to get a second shot off at the lower rate of fire. In a campaign game I would certainly encourage the use of the lower rate of fire and the bad gunpowder rule, though.

Good luck with the "new" Space Gamer. I hope to have another article for you soon.

James Dickey
Iowa City, Iowa

NEWS & PLUGS

Task Force Games has announced six new pocket games for release in April/May 1980: *Starfire II, Spellbinder,* and *Robots* are sf/fantasy; *Gunship!, Battlewagon,* and *To No End* are historical. Three boxed games are also upcoming: *The War of the Worlds* (based on the H. G. Wells book), *McPherson's Ridge*, and *Warsaw Pact.* Boxed games will be $9.95; pocket games will be $3.95.

The Journal of World War II Wargaming is a new magazine; it will appear bi-monthly, and its title tells the whole story. Subscriptions: as many issues as you want for $1/issue to Nick Schuessler, 1002 Warrington Drive, Austin, TX 78753.

Morningstar Publishing (223 Morningside NE, Albuquerque, NM 87108) offers two books of interest to fantasy gamers: *Shapeshifters and Skinwalkers* (a guide to lycanthropy) and *Painting Fantasy Miniatures*. Both are $5.95.

Avalon Hill has acquired the Battleline series of games from Heritage Models. Games in this group include *Samurai, Trireme, Naval War, Armor Supremacy, Viva Espana! Fury in the West, Alpha Omega,* and *Machiavelli.*

De Jager & Co. (POB 2307, Downsview, Ont., Canada M3N 2V8) offers the pbm game *The Assassin's Quest.* Rules $2; setup $2, turns $2 each.

The pbm game *Lords of Valetia* is once again being advertised. Gamers should be aware that this game has been plagued by difficulties in the past, and that many people have sent money and gotten few or no turns.

SPI has re-named its upcoming FRP game, formerly advertised as *Dragonslayer*. Martian Metals has trademarked *Dragonslayers* for a line of miniature figures. Sources at both companies report that SPI was basically unwilling to pay any licensing fee for the name. The new game, now called *DragonQuest*, will be previewed at Origins.

Ral Partha has released a series of boxed miniature games in the sf/fantasy field. Titles are *Final Frontier, Witch's Caldron, Caverns Deep, Galactic Grenadiers.* Each game includes rules, dice, play aids, and lead miniatures.

TSG BACK ISSUES

Some back issues of TSG are still available:

No. 15. Wizard and Olympica designer intros; Robotics in Traveller; Floating Hulks; Ogre Update; Orcs and Their Weapons; computer gaming.

No. 16. WarpWar article; Classics Simulated in Melee; Alpha Omega; Demons! (Moties in Melee); 1977 game survey results – and a LOT of reviews.

No. 17. GEV designer's intro; strategy for Chitin: I; variants for Imperium, Melee, and a combination Ogre/Rivets variant; WarpWar fiction.

No. 18. IceWar designer's intro; variant scenarios for Invasion: America and War of the Ring; additional equipment for Traveller; mounted Melee; "Referee, Declare Thyself!" (role-playing GM technique).

No. 19. POND WAR; variant units and scenarios for GEV; combining Imperium and WarpWar; Battlefleet Mars variant; reviews of Swords & Sorcery, Runequest, and Raumkrieg; MicroGame design article.

No. 20. Olympica tactics; Psionics in Traveller; TARTARS & MARTYRS; Reality in Melee; designer's optional rules for Ice War; designer's article on Starships & Spacemen; "Rip-Off Blues" (wargaming's frauds).

No. 21. Interview with Dave Arneson; running a Microgame tournament; tactics for Ogre and GEV; spaceship miniatures; Black Hole variant rules; putting the Deryni into Melee; more reviews.

No. 22. Ice War tactics; Black Hole physics; PARTY BRAWL; 1978 SF/fantasy game survey results; Fantasy Trip short story.

No. 23. Invasion Of The Air Eaters designer's article; Ogre meets Ice War; Sticks & Stones expansion; Vikings and Valde in The Fantasy Trip.

No. 24. Black Hole designer's intro; "The Psychology of Wargaming"; Naval Melee; "The Four-Howitzer Defense in Ogre"; variants for Chitin: I, The Creature That Ate Sheboygan, and John Carter of Mars.

No. 25. Stellar Conquest issue . . . designer's article, tournament tactics, and variant scenarios. Also – strategy in Rivets, benefit-cost analysis for Ice War, and "Everyday Life in *The Fantasy Trip*."

No. 26. Oneworld designer's intro; Tactics in G.E.V.; Variations on Wizard; Computers in Wargaming; Life-sized Melee; and a variant that puts human forces into Rivets.

No. 27. Hot Spot designer's introduction; Time Travel; Nuke the Air Eaters (gaming atomic war); Weapons for Hobbits in TFT; Muskets in TFT; Game Design Part 15 pages of game reviews.

No. 28. 1979 game survey results; Overmen in TFT; A Guide to SF/Fantasy Game Publishers; Task Force Games report; Writers' and Artists' Guides; 7 pages of reviews; Game Design Part 2; Deus ex Machina.

Send $2.00 per copy, plus 50 cents per order for postage and handling, to TSG, Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

Calendar

June 27-29: ORIGINS 80. Wargame con; Widener University, Chester, PA. Contact Origins 80, POB 139, Middletown, NJ 07748.

July 11-13: ARCHON IV. SF con; St. Louis, MO. Contact POB 15852, Overland, MO 63114.

July 11-13: MINNESOTA CAMPAIGN IV. Wargame con; Nicollet Hotel, Minneapolis, MN. Contact Jeff Berry, 343 E. 19th, Minneapolis, MN 55409; 612-871-6144.

July 12-13: WARGY XII. Wargame con; Platte College, Columbus, NE. Contact Rick Plankinton, RR 6 Box 43, Columbus, NE 68601.

July 25-26-27-28: 8TH ANNUAL FLYING BUFFALO CONVENTION. Wargame con; FBI headquarters, 1340 N. Scottsdale Rd., Tempe AZ. Contact Flying Buffalo, POB 1467, Scottsdale AZ 85252.

July 26-27: MASSCON 80. Wargame con, Campus Center, UMASS, Amherst, MA. Contact Dennis Wang, 11 Dickinson St., Amherst, MA 01002.

August 1-2-3: CWA-CON 80. Wargame con: College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL. Contact Chicago Wargamers' Assn., 3605 Bobolink, Rollingmeadows, IL 60008; 312-394-5618.

August 2-3: BANGOR MAINE AREA WARGAMERS' ANNUAL CONVENTION. Contact Edward F. Stevens Jr., 13 South St., Rockland, ME 04841; 207-594-2642.

August 8-9-10: ODYSSEY '80. Wargame con; UNH Memorial Union Building, Durham, NH. Contact R. Bradford Chase, 44 Highridge Drive, Dover, NH 03820.

August 21-24: GENCON XIII. Wargame con; University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, WI. Contact POB 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147; 414-248-9099.

August 29 to Sept. 1: NOREASCON 2. The 38th World SF Convention, Boston. Contact POB 46, MIT Branch Post Office, Cambridge, MA 02139.

August 30-Sept. 1: PACIFICON. Wargame con, San Mateo, CA. Contact David G. Hinkley, POB 5833, San Jose, CA 95150; 408-374-9770 or 371-4229.

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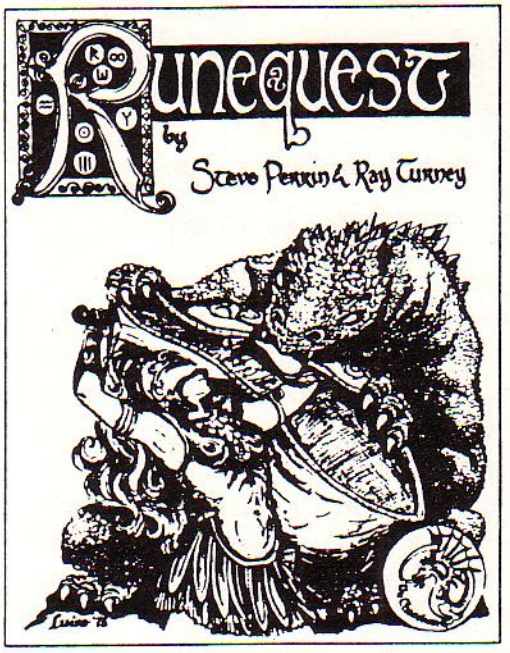

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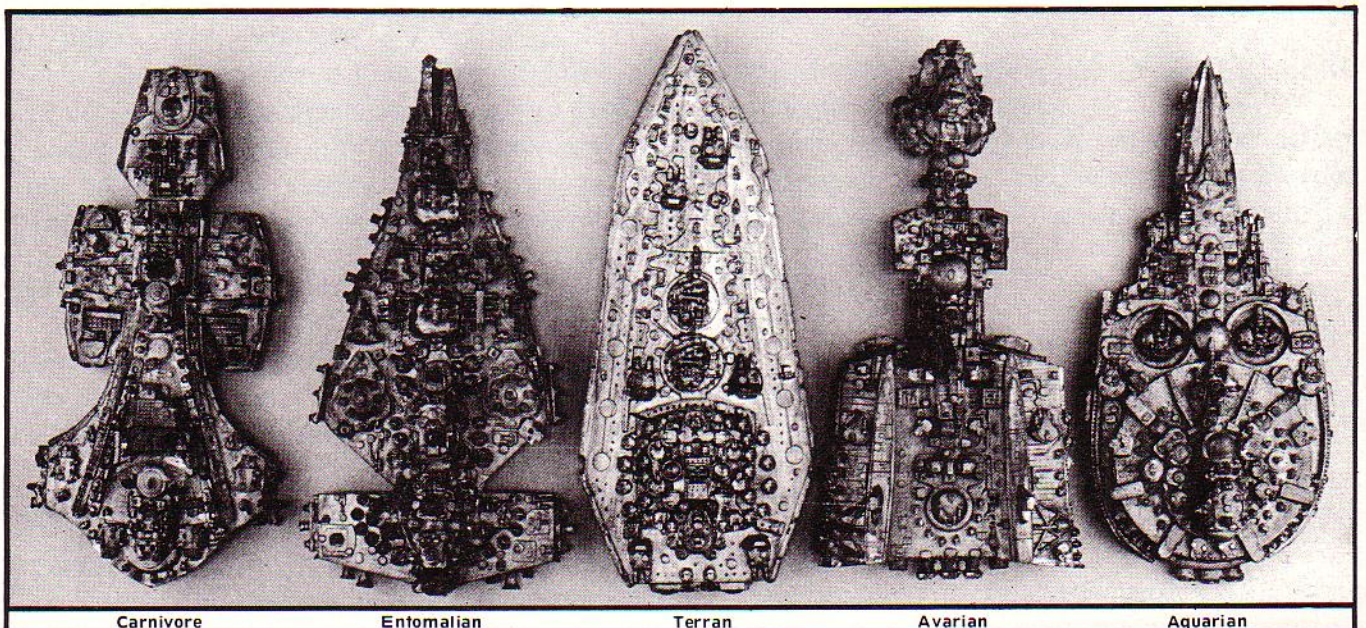

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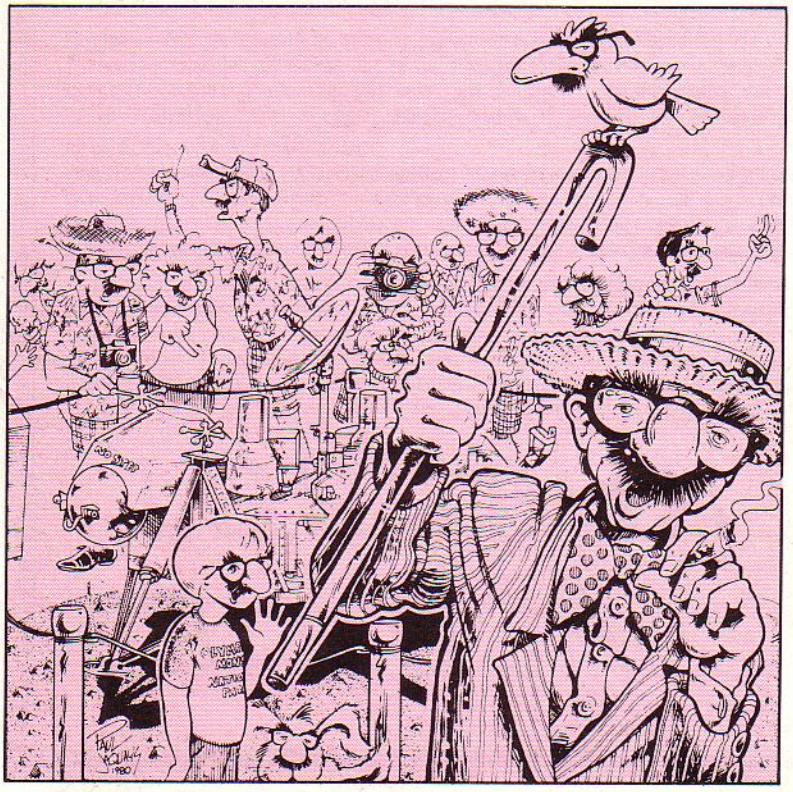

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